ENLARGED CHRISTMAS NUMBER

The Civer

Dec. 1925 16

O.DOUGLAS

CLEMENCE DANE

MICHAEL KENT

J.J.BELL



Skin health the foundation of beauty

Mother the health doctor



Mothers know dirt for what it is—and fear it.

They will not tolerate dirty schools, dirty streets, dirty homes or dirty children.

Lifebuoy Soap is one of the most widely used soaps in the world because mothers appreciate its scientific protection against the dangers of dirt.

Mothers know that Lifebuoy lather goes down deep into every pore, and removes impurities. They know that Lifebuoy keeps the skin soft, pliable, and glowing with health—that it is bland, pure and soothing to the tenderest skin—even that of a baby.

Buy Lifebuoy in the new pack, two large cakes in a carton



Lifebuoy Soap for HEALTH



HEY are daughters to be proud of-those quickly-growing, energetic girls. Their sparkling eyes, supple carriage, skins lovely with the clear flush of radianthealth, aremessages of cheer to the mothers who watch their develorment with anxious care. The vigorous out-door sports of to-day, which have ousted the embroidery and sampler making of yesterday, mean health and beauty to girlhood. One sees few complexions of the hot-house type today. Exercise means skin health. Yet that healthiness is a challenge to the germs of disease and impurities that are ever waiting for a congenial resting place to work their mischief.

Guard their skin health Mothers! See that these dangerous impurities do not work havoc with the fresh beauty of your girls' complexions. Guard their skin health, for it is in the pores of the skin that harmful germs find a ledging. See that their daily bath is taken with Lifebuoy Soap. Give them a tablet each week to keep in their school lockers. It will mean a clear, radiant skin when they attain womanhood.

Germs live in the pores
Put a cake of Litebuoy at every
place in your house where
hands are washed, to be used
by everybody old and young.
Dirt and impurities lodge in the
pores of the skin. Ordinary
cleansing doesn't remove them.
The rich lather of Litebuoy,
with its wonderful health element, goes deep down into the
pores and routs out the enemies
of the skin. The healthy odour
vanishes, but the protection
remains. Get Litebuoy now,
Buy it in the rew pa.k. two
large cakes in each carton.
Lever Brothers Lanited, Port
Sunlight.



The traveller's Food Beverage

Experience bids you go armed against the fatigues of travel. Appetite must be met or energy slackens, discomfort ensues.

Pack a flask of the "Allenburys" Diet—hot or cold, as preferred. A nip, an hour or two after starting, will prove delightfully refreshing. Invigorating, too!

This, the ideal combination of fresh, full-cream milk and wheat is more than a drink. It is a concentrated, perfectlybalanced food which will make good the added call on vitality and tide you over to the next full meal.

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Long after Christmas has gone he will come home to his "fireside friend" to read or smoke in peaceful relaxation after the busy day's work. What a splendid gift for a man is the Berkeley - and what great comfort for so little cost! Huge production and a wonderful factory organisation enable us to offer the Berkeley at a price never before dreamed of for an Easy Chair of such sound value and honest worth.

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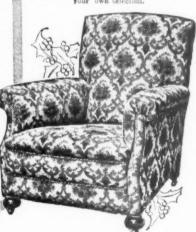
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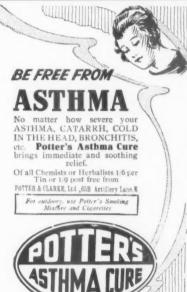
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Made in soft, durable drill of finest quality, without steels, but with 9-inch rust-proof busk but with 9-inch rust-proof busk and rust-proof hook and eye above and below for perfect fastening. Lacing is at the sides with free-running elastic lacing, and the back is closed. Adjust-able shoulder straps regulate bust able shoulder straps regulate bust height, and the usual suspenders are fitted. As there is nothing to rust it can easily be washed. In all sizes from 20 to 30 inch waist. 31 inch to 35 inch, 1s. 6d. extra.

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Doctor B, writes of his non: "If mossive kim pon would hartly know him from refer you saw kin hefore." This patient suffered 18 years before taking the Bule Treatment. Since served in the army in Mesopotamia in the Grant War, is now married and enjoying yood health.

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any that you you have done me,
and that you you have done me,
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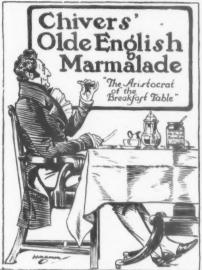
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0

Could the cat have come?
—Seen the mouse I made—
Carried it away
In a midnight raid?

0

Or someone grown-up Taken my treasure To make themselves mice At their own leisure.

0

That is more likely; The Grown-ups are keen On stealing children's Plasticine.

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NOW THEN!! Mr. "Grown-Up"

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Free 4/9 or 6/9—and
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BEECHAM'S PILLS.

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GIVE YOU

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You'll tingle with life

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Will keep you right.



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The QUIVEP

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The Editor's Announcement Page

NEW YEAR'S NUMBER

The New Year's Number of THE QUIVER will be published before Christmas—December 22nd—and will be specially seasonable. First of all there is another long instalment of the serial by O. DOUGLAS; then Annie S. Swan is to contribute a New Year's story, "Let's Begin Again"; this concerns a Scottish girl who comes to London, and will interest readers both north and south of the border. Mary Wiltshire is giving an historical story of a seasonable character called "The Jay-Pays," showing how a couple of Justices of the Peace dealt with an unusual situation, and how other people dealt with it too.

H. M. Forbes is writing an article of unusual interest to Scottish readers—"In the Footsteps of the Covenanters." This will be fully illustrated by views of places made famous by the men who signed

the Covenant.

PERCY SCHOLES contributes an article on Mozart, more especially for listeners-in; and there is a fully illustrated article on "Japan: The Land of Little Things." Of a different character is OLIVE MARY SALTER'S article, "Handicaps," and that by Mrs.
W. L. GEORGE on "The Fatal Forties," dealing

with marriage and middle-age.

Altogether a brilliant number. Please order in advance to make sure of obtaining it.

The Editor

DR. BARNARDO'S HOMES



Certainly! Barnardo's never refuse a destitute child, and that is the reason why in the 59 years of their existence they have admitted over 100,000 orphan and destitute little ones. But such a work is constantly in need of funds if its Charter, "No destitute child ever refused admission," is to be maintained.

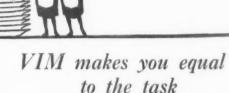
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To Feed One Child for Ten Days?

"May Igoin ?"

Cheques and Orders payable "Dr. Barnardo's Homes Food Fund," and crossed, may be sent to the Honorary Treasurer, Howard Williams, Esq. (Dept. Q.), 18-26 Stepney Causeway, London, E.1.

Don't let it make you feel small -



When the pile of dirty dishes looks gigantic, don't let it make you feel small. Vim will turn the giant into a dwarf. Vim multiplies the efficiency of your arm one hundred per cent. Sprinkle a little Vim in the washing-up water or on your dampened cleaning cloth. what a wonderful difference it makes. Watch it chase away grease and black, soot and stains, rust and dinginess off dishes and kitchen-ware. Only the blackest things will even require rubbing. Put Vim to work in your home.





LEVER BROTHERS LID. PORTSUNLIGHT

There are no "Ifs" with "Star Sylko!"

NO need now to say, "If knitting material would only keep its gloss!" Everything you make with Ardern's "Star Sylko" will wear and wash and still be as lustrous as new. "Star Sylko" doesn't stretch either. It keeps a garment in shape. It is evenly spun and of super quality. No "Ifs," but certain satisfaction in knitting, crocheting, or embroidering. In order to interest every woman, Ardern's invite all to compete in their newest Competition-there are 668 Prizes-all in cash.

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£520 Prize Competition is announced in Needlework Illustrated." Get a copy of



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THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE Always ask for a "Dr. COLLIS BROWNE"

Of all Chemists, 1 3 and 3 -





"A moment later, his neck in the grip of one merciless hand, his arm in that of another, he was, perforce, presenting the purse to its owner "----p, 100



Almost Anything May Happen J. J. BELL

T midday on the 24th of December, Miss Monica Starling, absently regarding her typewriter, was not feeling quite as gay as one is supposed to feel on that date. She could not have told why, or at least precisely why. She was in the best of health, though for the last four months her work in the office had been uncommonly exacting. She was not in love with the wrong person-in fact, she was not in love with anyone-and, while not too well off, she had a small balance with the City and Midland in Chancery Lane. And she would certainly never have admitted, even to herself, that she was not looking forward to spending Christmas with Doris and the children at her sister's home in Devon. Yet there was a something-a something that seemed to take the shine off the holiday prospect.

At the opening of the door from the main office she looked up, expecting a girl with a basket of fresh work for the typewriter. But it was the managing director who entered; and she was surprised, because, though frequently summoned to his room, she had never before received him in hers. He was a tall, hard-featured man, just, and no more, in his dealings with the staff.

and no more, in his dealings with the staff.
"Sit still," he said, in his curt way, and closed the door. "Finished?"

"Not quite, Mr. Marlow. There will be a little more presently. I can have it cleated off by three o'clock, easily."

"Very well. You can leave as soon as you have finished. I have to leave now, I came in to say that I have just been discussing your work with the directors. It has been satisfactory. Your knowledge of French and German has been of considerable service to the firm. We have decided to appoint you head of the new section—at once. The salary will be eight pounds a week. Good morning!" He passed to the door, came back and held out his hand.

"Compliments of the season," he said stiffly, and went out, leaving her speechless.

"Eight pounds a week!" She had hoped for promotion in a small way; never anything like this. And on Christmas Eve, too! It was just the thrill she had needed. As she went out to lunch the holiday prospect seemed certainly bright enough.

After lunch she called at the bank. She had intended to draw £10. She had already bought gifts for Doris and the children, but now they seemed wretchedly inadequate. Her pass-book showed a credit of £53 6s. od. It still seemed a lot of money to Monica, but all at once she became joyously aware that she did not really require it—and

Doris's good husband had been having a

pretty thin time of it lately.

Perhaps the cashier wondered, not unsympathetically, why she smiled as she signed the cheque; but somewhat to Monica's chagrin he showed no amazement on seeing that the cheque was for £50.

"Four tens, please, one five, and five ones," she said, thinking of Doris's big eyes when the tenners came out of her

stocking.

Having packed the wealth into her purse, which already contained a few pounds and some silver, she gave the cashier a smile for himself and returned to the office, where, her promotion having become known, smiles were the order of the afternoon.

At three o'clock the work was finished, and while she tidied up she considered how best she could spend the five-pound note for the delight of the children. She had a good hour to spare before making for Paddington. Her suit-case was already there in the cloakroom; her ticket was taken, her seat reserved.

She was locking up when the office boy

brought her a telegram.

"Don't come. Children all mumps.

Dreadfully sorry.-Doris.'

Undeniably it was a dash of cold on her warra happiness. Her first thought was to ignore the "Don't come"; her second, that mumps, which had never been her portion, were horribly infectious. In a few days she was due to take up her new and responsible position, and it was unthinkable that she should risk getting laid up at the very outset. Reluctantly she abandoned the desire to help her sister in person. But she would telegraph the forty pounds to Doris and send the kiddies' gifts by passenger train. After that she would consider what to do with herself—rather a problem, by the way.

In this mind she left the office, her immediate destination the East Strand post office. As the lift descended it occurred to her that her purse might be safer in her hand than in her bag, and, emerging from the building, she made the change. The purse, not a large one, had a pleasantly fat look, and Monica was an exceedingly pretty girl; so it would have been unsafe to guess just then which of the two attractions caused the lean-featured, fairly well-dressed young man to drop the stub of his cigarette and follow. At all events, Monica was too deeply absorbed in her thoughts to notice him.

On entering the East Strand office she found the telegraph counter besieged by a crowd several deep, and determined to try one of the offices farther west. Keeping a firm grip of her wealth, she proceeded briskly along the Strand till her eve was caught by the sheen of a cutler's window, in which lights were already burning. The very thing! Doris's big boy had always craved one of those wonderful pocket-knives containing a dozen queer instruments as well as blades; and now he should have the best that money could buy. She turned to the window, almost colliding with the leanfeatured young man who, one imagines, had kept near lest he should lose sight of her on the thronged pavement.

The shop next to the cutler's was a hosier's, from the door of which emerged just then a young man of debonair rather than handsome appearance, but well-favoured withal. For a moment or two he remained in the doorway, surveying the stream of humanity with that air of interest and, it may be, amusement which betokens not the stranger, but the occasional visitor to London. And then his glance swerved to Monica and lingered. It was a glance so frankly admiring as to be void of offence, as even Monica must have admitted had she

been conscious of it.

But Monica's gaze was upon a wondrous knife, and she was trying to read the price which had got turned upside down. Had she looked then at the debonair young man she would have seen his expression suddenly harden and his lips shape to utter a cry of warning.

A smart, stinging blow on her elbowher fingers spread open-her precious purse

gone! . . .

Yet the thief was hardly quick enough. As he darted across the hosier's doorway the debonair young man literally fell on him. A moment later, his neck in the grip of one merciless hand, his arm in that of another, he was, perforce, presenting the purse to its owner.

"Take it," said the captor to the girl. A crowd was already gathering. He glanced at the face of his prisoner, and perhaps he saw something not evil there. "If you don't mind," he went on rapidly, "I'll let him go. Give him a chance. Christmas Eve,

you know, and all that. . . ."

Monica nodded. As a rule, she kept her wits, though an emergency usually found her speechless.

"Look here," said the young man softly,

ALMOST ANYTHING MAY HAPPEN

and his hand flashed to his hip and thence, with a Treasury note, to the hand of the astounded wretch, "try another way. You're free. No need to run. No charge against you. Go!"

Probably the fellow could not have run had he tried. Without a look he slunk

away.

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With a smile Mr. Debonair regarded the cluster of gaping countenances. "Never seen a screen rehearsal before—eh?" he said pleasantly, and turned to the girl. "What about a cab?" He thought she still looked unnerved, and the publicity to such a girl was, of course, horrid.

Again she nodded.

Almost before she knew he had hailed a taxi and was putting her into it.

"Feeling all right?" he asked kindly, as she sat down.

Once more she answered with a nod, feeling an idiot for her tongue-tiedness.

"Where, please?" he inquired.

"P-Paddington," she managed to say, and then she was carried away, with a mere glimpse of him, hat in hand, smiling

gravely, at the pavement's edge.

"And I never even thanked him," she thought presently. "What should I have done without a penny, the bank and office closed, and every person I know welt enough gone out of town?" Which brought forward the problem she had relegated to the background.

But before dealing with it she had the cab stopped at a post office, where she got the forty pounds safely off to Doris, also a somewhat extravagant telegram, and then proceeded to one of London's great stores, where she made purchases calculated to bring joyous smiles to the mumpiest of young visages. And then she went on to

Paddington.

Over a cup of tea there she considered her own situation. Here she was, on the eve of Christmas, very much alone in London. Even her landlady had gone away, shutting up the house. There were one or two friends not far out of town to whom she might telegraph or phone, but apart from her dislike of "butting in" on people at such a time, Monica was not quite sure that she wanted to be anyone's guest. She was far from feeling dejected. She was, in fact, rather excited. Within the space of a few hours she had experienced two big thrills, and-well, to be perfectly frank, she wanted more. And would it not be a thrill to be all alone in London for Christmas? Depressing? She did not believe it. The sense of freedom would be a thrill in itself. A small giggle escaped her. She would do it! She would go to that nice little hotel in Bloomsbury Street where Doris and her husband used to stay for long week-ends when their affairs were flourishing. She would dine late and do a theatre, and on Christmas day, after service, she would just wander around and see how other people spent the day. Depressing? Absurd!



Meanwhile the debonair young man, whose name, by the way, was Colin Hart, and who hailed from the North, having strolled through the Temple and drifted up Kingsway, entered his hotel and inquired of the hall porter whether his things had been brought down.

"Yes, sir. Want a taxi?"

"In ten minutes," said Colin, after a glance at the clock. "Forty minutes is ample for Paddington, isn't it?"

A page boy presented a telegram. "Came in an hour ago, sir." Colin read, muttered an exclamation of annoyance, and then stood staring regretfully at the message—

"Sorry to say, don't come. Kiddies got mumps.—Trebolt."

"What vile luck for them all!" he said to himself. "And what on earth am I to do with myself? Go home, or run down to Brighton or somewhere? I'm certainly not going to stop in London over Christmas." He turned to the porter's desk. "Let me have an ABC, please," he said, and having received that entertaining publication, carried it over to the lounge.

At the end of seven minutes he had settled on Brighton, mainly because he had business in London again on the 27th. He was feeling considerably disheartened. He had been looking forward keenly to the meeting with his old war comrade, Trebolt, whom he had not seen for some years. He got up, took a couple of paces, and stopped

short as if transfixed.

A girl, followed by a porter carrying a suit-case, had come into the hall. She went over to the bureau and apparently booked a room. She then disappeared into the lift. She was the girl whose purse he had rescued an hour ago.

The attentive hall-porter approached.
"Your cab is there, Mr. Hart. I have
put your things inside."

THE QUIVER

"Take them out, please. Give the man this "—a florin. "I'm not leaving—at the moment."

"Very good, sir."

In the same instant Colin called himself an ass. Why, in the name of common sense, had he changed his plan? What was he going to do now? Did he expect the girl to recognize him in any fashion but the most formal? He was not the sort of man to regard the incident of the purse as constituting an introduction. And judging from her apparent shyness then, would his presence in the hotel now not be a serious embarrassment to her? She might even fancy that he had, somehow, tracked her there. Yes, he was an ass—and he started to go after the hall porter.

And yet—no use denying it—he had wanted, and did want, to see the girl again. He returned to the deserted lounge and threw himself into an easy chair. At least, he would have one glimpse of her before he departed for Brighton. So he sat there waiting, his gaze in the direction of the

lift.

An hour passed—and another. Colin had lunched lightly, had forgotten about tea, and was now feeling hungry. He was also feeling dull, if not positively dismal. The hotel seemed dead. But, somehow, he could not leave without that glimpse.

At seven o'clock, cross with himself and the world, he went into the long dining-room and took a seat at the nearest table. At first he thought he was the only guest there, but a waiter switched on more lights and he saw in a distant corner—the girl. She must have come down by the stair, he told himself, and tried not to look at her—which was, of course, impossible.

Monica was so astonished that her bow was more frigid than she could have wished it to be, and Colin, taking his cue therefrom, returned it with a perfectly wooden expression of countenance. Then Monica, who at the outset had judged him to be a gentleman, and who had no suspicions regarding his presence in the hotel, remembered what she owed him, felt sorry she had appeared ungracious, and produced a demure little smile which would have done Colin no end of good could it have passed through the body of the waiter who had chosen the instant to say, "Thick or clear, sir?"

Ten minutes passed before their glances met, and then the stupidity of the situation seemed to dawn on both. Here they were, two nicely brought up young people, solitaries in an hotel dining-room, and on Christmas Eve of all times; and, after all, that meeting in the Strand did surely count for something. And suddenly they both smiled, quite naturally.

Taking courage, Colin rose and crossed what seemed a mile or so of carpet. At

her table he bowed and said:

"Forgive the intrusion, but may I hope you are feeling none the worse of that horrid experience?"

Monica, being prepared, was not speechless this time. "Not a bit," she replied. "and I'm glad to have the chance of thanking you now. I'd have been in a most awful hole if you hadn't caught the manpoor wretch!"

"So you really did approve of my letting him go," said Colin. "I'm glad of that. My first idea was to spare you a police case, but there was something in the chap's eyes—desperation—"

"Yes, I saw it—and, as you said, it is Christmas Eve when——" She paused,

"When anything," finished Colin, greatly daring, "may happen." He smiled. "Almost anything, I mean."

It was at this point that Monica's waiter tentatively placed a chair for Colin, glancing as he did so at the lady.

"I wonder if I might," said Colin softly.

A delicious pink warmed the girl's cheeks, but she replied calmly enough, "Why not?"

"And shall I," said that heaven-inspired waiter, "serve the gentleman's dinner at this table?"

"Really, it seems too much to ask," said

Colin, his wish in his eyes.

"Perhaps it is rather absurd to be dining at opposite ends of the room," Monica remarked to no one in particular, and the wise waiter said, "Certainly, madam," and became busy. Doubtless he also believed that almost anything—in the way of gratuities—might happen on Christmas Eve: at all events, Colin did not disappoint him afterwards.

"My name, if you please," said the young

man, "is Colin Hart."

"Mine," said the girl, "is Monica Starling." (He thought, "She was bound to have a beautiful name.") "But——" She he-sitated.

"Yes, Miss Starling?"

"Oh, well, you know, it's all a-rather unusual, and perhaps it is enough that we know each other's names—don't you think?"

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"'I suppose Santa don't like them gas fires,' said the chambermaid, 'so 'e left it 'anging on the door 'andle' "-p. 105

Drawn by J. Dewar Mills

She said it a little awkwardly, but alto-

gether charmingly.

"I understand," he replied, "and I promise not to bore you with any personal or family history. I assure you I realize that I am being thus graciously treated simply and solely because it chances to be Christmas Eve."

"M'm." She smiled. "Anyway, let us blame it all on Christmas Eve-even the

adventure in the Strand."

"I'm afraid I prevented your buying something then. Afterwards I felt I had been officious about the cab, but you looked a bit shaken, and I fancied you might wish to get away from those curious people.'

"The cab was a kind thought," she said. "Have you been staying here long?" she

asked in more formal tones.

"A week; but my stay to-night was quite unexpected. At the last moment a tele-He stopped in time to save the truth. It was not, of course, the telegram that had caused postponement of his departure.

"My stay over Christmas was also un-

expected," she remarked.

"Then you are not leaving in the morning?" He was conscious of his own eagerness. "I beg your pardon, Miss Starling."

"I'm afraid it will be rather dull," she said, and felt a little ashamed of her insincerity; "but it will be a new experience. Are we the only guests in the hotel?"

"It looks like it. I don't suppose they are expecting anyone to-night-unless per-

haps Santa Claus."

She laughed. "I had forgotten about him. Are you looking for him, Mr. Hart?' "Alas, no! He thinks I am elsewhere."

"My case is the same. It will be rather odd"-did she sigh?-"to find nothing in the morning," Then she pulled herself up. This would never do. They were getting almost intimate. "Have you been to any of the theatres?"

Colin, who had seen several new plays, proceeded to tell her about them, and the conversation ran on impersonal lines till the

waiter prepared to serve coffee.

Monica, glancing at her watch, got up, saving, "Please excuse me, and please sit still and have your coffee. I want, if possible, to get a seat in one of the theatres."

Colin, already on his feet, waved away

the waiter.

"Miss Starling," he said gently, "it's a liberty, yet surely not one altogether unpardonable. May I ask if you are thinking of going to a theatre alone?"

Somehow she could not feel annoyed. though dignity was in her answer. "I'm a business girl, Mr. Hart, and quite used to going out alone." Which was true up to a certain point. She had certainly never gone alone to a West-end theatre at night.

He bowed. "All the same, you may have difficulty in finding a seat to-night. I'm risking a snub, but I suggest that you allow me to phone for two seats-for one of which you shall pay-and permit my escort. And, if you wish, I shall hold my tongue the whole evening."

"Oh, really!" said Monica, and blushed adorably. "But that is quite impossiblethough I'm sure you mean it kindly."

"Hardly anything is impossible on Christmas Eve. My plan is unconventional, but no more so than yours of going alone. In the circumstances I think any decent chap would offer his escort."

"You are making it very difficult for ma

to refuse, Mr. Hart."

"I hope I am, Miss Starling."

All at once they both smiled. She made a little gesture of defeat.

"I am being extravagant for to-night," she said frankly, "so I leave the choice of seats to you.

"It's only eight o'clock," he remarked, going with her to the lift. "Give me ten

minutes, please."

The obliging hall porter undertook to ring up the box offices, and Colin, who had another thing besides the theatre in his mind, went to the door and stepped outside It was a fine evening, not cold. He hesitated on the step. Supposing the right shop was still open, could he do what he wanted to do and be back within ten minutes?

"Sir!" A lean figure had come timidly

into the light.

"What's this!" exclaimed Colin, recog-

nizing the thief of the Strand.

"Been waiting to thank you-followed you up from the Temple-wanted to say I'll try another way-hope you'll believe it was my first attempt-had been refused by a man who ought to have helped-was desperate-bitter-the sight of the purse . . ."

"That's all right," said Colin soothingly. "Have you been waiting here since I came

The other-he was little more than a boy "Thank you-and a happy -nodded. Christmas, sir." He turned to go.

"Hold on!" Colin spoke hurriedly. The precious moments were slipping away "I've got an engagement now, but come

ALMOST ANYTHING MAY HAPPEN

and see me to-morrow morning-here's my card. Come at nine-come to breakfast."

"You don't mean that, sir!"

"I'm asking you. The place is empty, and we can talk things over. If I can I'll help."

The other drew a long breath. "I'll surely come," he said unsteadily; "and if you've changed your mind, I'll understand, and still be thanking you. My name's Harry Wilshire. Good night, sir.'

"Good night." Colin looked over his

shoulder and started.

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Miss Starling was in the hall, down before her time. His little secret scheme was vain! Unless-

"Wait, wait," he said. "If you like, Wilshire, there's something you can do for me.

"If I like!" cried the other, wheeling round. "What is it, sir?"

"Are the shops still open?" "Lots of them, sure to be."

Colin wrote in his notebook, tore out the leaf and handed it, along with a Treasury note, to Wilshire. "Get that for me, write my name-Colin Hart-on the parcel, and hand it to the hall porter. You can give me the change in the morning. Understand?"

Wilshire looked at the writing-"White silk stocking-fine quality-largest size,"

"Would it not be a pair, sir?" he

solemnly inquired.

"Yes, yes. I dare say they don't sell single ones. Good-night. See you in the morning," With a friendly wave Colin turned indoors.

The hall porter had obtained seats for a comedy. Monica insisted on settling her share on the spot, to Colin's amusement and the hall porter's wonderment. "A lucky man, if he gets her," the porter said to himself, opening the door for them.



In the theatre Colin behaved with the utmost discretion. He bought a programme, but refrained from offering ices or chocolates. She watched the play attentively, and he slid not watch ber more than he could help. She seemed to grow prettier between his glances.

On the way back-they walked-he told her of Wilshire. "If you are an early bird, I thought you would not mind breakfasting in your room-but, of course, I could easily get a private room."

"I shan't be an early bird, and, in any

case, I'd rather breakfast in my room. Why are you doing this for him, Mr. Hart?"

"It's just possible he may have touched bottom—and, anyway, it happens to be Christmas." And Colin might well have added: "Besides, I owe him this meeting of ours."

"You are good," she said impulsively. "If I can help in a very small way, will you let me know?"

"If I think he deserves it, I'll tell him that," said Colin.

After which their conversation was inclined to be scrappy.

On entering the hotel she said, "Good night. And thanks awfully. I know now I'd have felt horrid if I had gone alone."

He saw her into the lift, without making any inquiries concerning the morrow. Then the hall porter handed him a small parcel. Wilshire had survived the test, though Colin had scarcely thought of it as that.



"Merry Christmas, madam!"

Monica, who had been long in falling asleep, awoke with a start.

The chambermaid stood by, smiling broadly, a tea-tray in one hand, and in the other-Monica rubbed her eves and stared-a huge, bulging white stocking.

"I suppose Santa don't like them gas fires," said the chambermaid, "so 'e left it 'angin' on the door 'andle. Just ring when you want me, madam." She went out, leaving the tray on the table and the stocking on the bed.

Monica sat up. The string that tied the mouth of the stocking confined a folded paper with her name on it. She released the paper, hesitated, opened it, and read:

"Santa Claus apologizes for gifts so inappropriate, but he could not let pass the occasion. And because almost anything may happen on Christmas Eve he trusts in your charity to forgive. His deputy, C. H."

It was impossible to be really angry, yet she paused before opening the stocking, And when she did undo the string she gave a small shrick, for a hairy object, a mechanical monkey, sprang forth and bounded about the bed. Followed a duck that started quacking, then a very lovely little doll, happily dumb, a box of soldiers, an air-pistol, a box of chocolate an mals, and finally an orange and a halfpenny.

Monica lay back and laughed, partly with amusement, partly with relief. The ridiculousness made it all right. But how on

earth had he got all those toys at midnight, and where, oh where, had he got the giantess' stocking? Truly, almost anything might happen on Christmas Eve! And then she was just a little touched, for she guessed that he had thought of her alone in an hotel on Christmas morning and had sought to give her at least a smile 'o begin the day with.

When they met in the lounge, they shook hands—for the first time—and wished each other a "Merry Christmas." He told her of the interview with Wilshire, who had just gone, how he was going to find the boy a berth, believing he would go straight. "And because I thought it would stiffen him, I told him that one of the pounds I lent him was yours."

"That," she said warmly, "was just very nice of you, and—goodness me, I've left my purse upstairs!" And she insisted on going up for it.

On her return, handing him the note, she said a trifle shyly, "And thank you, Mr. Deputy, for the lovely stocking—" She blushed adorably.

"I should hardly have called it that," Colin returned, colouring also. "I was terrified, but somehow I had to do it. As for the toys, I had intended them for my visit to a friend with several kiddies, the friend, by the way, who recommended this hotel to me. But at the last moment the

visit was cancelled. Of course, I shall replace the toys. The poor kiddies have got mumps—"

"Mumps!"

"Yes—I believe the word is much funnier than the trouble—but I had never thought of mumps in Devon."

"Devon, Mr. Hart?"

"Strange but true, Miss Starling. My Devon friend Trebolt's wire distinctly mentioned mumps. . . . What have I said?"

"He's my brother-in-law-Mr. Trebolt! I was to have gone there for Christmas!"

They gazed at each other till-

"Why," cried Colin, "then we know each other perfectly well!"

At which truly logical remark Miss Starling dissolved in laughter.

"Anyway," he pursued, "we don't need to be so fearfully formal as we've been."

"Oh, please!" she gasped. "Formal!"
"Ours was no chance meeting, Miss Starling. It was Fate—no, Providence!"

"I'm afraid it was my purse."

"I'd rather you said it was mumps. At any rate, there was a reason for it."

"M'm!" said Monica soberly, and got up. "I must go to church, Mr. Hart."

"May I not come, too?" he asked softly.
"M'm!" said Monica still more soberly.

Goodness knows what "m'm" means, but in the Book of True Loves it is recorded that they went to church together.



God's Man

Earth gave Him little To eat or to wear. Never a fireside, And never a stair. Stones at a well-head Made Him a seat, Only the greensward Was kind to His feet.

By Fay Inchfawn

Martha received Him,
And still her name glows:
But who washed His linen,
And mended His clothes?
Who cleaned His sandals,
Or gave Him a place
Where He might sit silent
Alone for a space?

Men gave Him a dinner
Just once in a way,
But where was His holding
On every day?
No place at a table,
No latch was His right,
No room of His own
Could He enter at night.

Even dead, He must lie In another man's grave— O my soul, be His servant! My body, !lis slave!



The Christmas of Christmases Brenda E. Spender

HE Christmas of Christmases would never have happened if old Mrs. Gregory, just a little tired of bustling through the crowded Christmas Eve shops and staring into windows in the High Street, hadn't made getting tea- with buttered toast, granny? Yes, of course, with buttered toast-ready for their return, an excuse for going on home alone. There was still the toy bazaar at Smithson's to be seen, and that was in the basement, and old Mrs. Gregory had had enough of stairs for one day. Ethel and the children would do well enough without her there and, after all, it would be nice for them to come in out of the cold December afternoon and find their tea ready and waiting, the fire poked to a blaze and the buttered toast, of course, all hot and smelling deliciously on the hearth. So it happened that she went home first alone, and so the best of the Christmases became a possibility, for if they had all gone home together it never could have been brought to pass-that is beyond all doubt or gain-aying.

As she stood on her front doorstep, getting her key out of the very bottom of her big, black leather handbag and saying to herself that there was quite a nice gleam of fire showing through the parlour window, so that the room would soon be warm and ready, her neighbour, Mrs. Pilkington, opened her front door and came slipslopping, in down-at-heel shoes too big for her, to the failing which divided their gardens. Mrs. Pilkington wore a man's tweed cap on the top of her head to hide the fact that her hair was only turned up, not "done," and it was obvious from her hurden apron and her red, wet hands that at four o'clock on Christmas Eve she was still busy with her cleaning. Mrs. Gregory was one of those homely artists to whom a perfect neatness, the gleam of bright metals, the cheerful shining of polished woods, is the beauty they must create. Daughter and widow and mother of sailors, her standard was that of the captain's cabin, and could not well be other. If she disliked any class of human beings it was the shiftless, sloppy school of never-done housewives; but from the kindness of her heart she managed to excuse Mrs. Pilkington by calling her a "poor creature" and treating her as though slovenliness was to be pitied, like ill-health. She now turned at hearing her neighbour's voice.

"I was watching out for you, Mrs. Gregory. I scrubbed me hall before I set the parlour right because I said to meself, 'That's the way I'll catch them first thing as they come in.' There's been a telegraph for you, Mrs. Gregory."

"A-a telegraph?" Mrs. Gregory faltered, and felt vexed with herself because she could not help that sudden breathless terror which always beset her at the sight of a telegram or a telegraph messenger at her door. She alone knew how years ago John's father had been taken away out of her life for ever, irrevocably lost, dead and buried at sea, by such a message read with unbelief and then with agony while her baby crowed and gurgled in her lap. Of course she knew that such a thing could not happen twice in one woman's life, it was not likely that God would let it, only she could not help remembering.

"I expect John's getting home earlier than he thought. The Southern Queen's had a good voyage." She made herself smile. "Where is it?"

"I've got it here. I told the boy I'd see ye got it at once. I don't like telegraphs, not Christmas Eve somehow."

Mts. Gregory took the envelope in her decent black kid-gloved hand, but she didn't open it. She had no need to, for as she took it she knew what was in it,

knew that all her fears were fulfilled and all her consolations false.

"Well, thank you, Mrs. Pilkington," she said at last, seeming to herself to wake up from a sort of trance; and, to her neighbour's intense disappointment, turned away with the envelope still unopened and let

herself in at her front door.

It was very quiet and warm in her little front hall, as though the house had been sitting silent and expectant waiting for her return, so that, after she had shut the door and was fumbling at the matches trying to strike a light, the sound of her own voice was clearly audible, saying over and over, just above a whisper:

"Oh, God, let it be he's coming home sooner; let them have their Christmas; let

it be he's coming soon!"

The telegram, which was for Ethel, informed her that to the owner's deep regret the Southern Queen was reported lost. Fire, a wireless call and help that came too late-lost with all hands. All hands! That included the second mate, or they would not have telegraphed to his wife. Ethel had lost her husband, Billy and Jan their father, and John Gregory's mother her only child.

She stood there under the gas in the warm little hall, and her lined old face, robbed of all its ruddy hues, showed ghastly in its despair. "Would that I had died for him," was her heart's cry, and her eyessunken, filmed, old eyes they looked at that moment-saw on into the years ahead. Ethel a widow and a widow indeed, for her marriage had been marriage indeed; and Billy, with his bonny face and merry eyes, making some painful, difficult start in life, very different from all they had planned; and Baby Jan, little, delicate, pathetic, flower-like Jan, whose health was even now a source of endless anxiety, what might it mean for her?

"And what can I do to help them?" said old Mrs. Gregory. "John, my boy, you shouldn't have died. It ought to have been

It seemed impossible to her for a few moments, as news so sharp and sudden often does to those whose lives it cuts in twain. This was to have been such a special Christmas. There were toys hidden in her cupboard upstairs, the little larder was full of good things, and yards of coloured paperchains lay ready to go with the holly Ethel was bringing in to make the homely rooms look beautiful and gay. There was a

Christmas tree John's own idea, a secret between him and his mother-hidden in the wash-house. Even Ethel wasn't to know of it until John himself went out and carried it in all ablaze with lights and tinsel, and hung with his Christmas gifts for them all, carefully bought and gaily packed by old Mrs. Gregory. It was the first Christmas since his marriage that John had ever spent at home, even though he wasn't to arrive until the afternoon of Christmas Day at the earliest. Ethel herself-it was like herhad suggested that they should all spend it together at Grandmother Gregory's, even though Westmouth lay some way from Southampton and it would make his coming to her an hour or two later still. It was to have been the Christmas above all others and suddenly Mrs. Gregory, looking round, realized that not only had they lost this Christmas, but that never, not for her, nor for Ethel, nor for the children, would Christmas ever be Christmas again. The tragedy of their personal loss would darken the fairest, happiest day of the year for them for ever. The bright day would be a day of sorrow. They would never know a Christmas such as John had planned for them. Christmas for them meant tears,

"Ah," she said at last, "they might just have had this one happy day like Johnnie planned them to. He was so set on this Christmas, and now-now-" She stopped and looked at the sheet of pinkish paper in her hand. "Oh, Johnnie lad, you'd like them to have it still . . . they shall, lad

. . . I'm able for it."

She folded the telegram and put it back in its envelope, and hid it in the inside-

pocket of her deep black bag.

She looked a curiously grim and resolute little figure, slipping about the home with her bonnet strings loosed, stirring the fire, setting the cups and saucers, cutting rounds of bread for toast from the tine white loaf, as neat-handed and methodical as ever, though her heart lay dead in her breast and the hand that held the toasting-fork was trembling. She did not light the sittingroom gas, and luckily the fire had scorched her cheeks to a brighter red than usual, so that outside she looked little different from her usual self when, with a sound of laughter and scurrying feet, Ethel, with the children running on before her, came to the

"You've been a fine long time, you shopgazers," she said to them, making her lips smile and wondering whether it showed that

THE CHRISTMAS OF CHRISTMASES

her heart down under her smile was bleeding.

"I know, granny dear." Her daughter-in-law stooped and kissed her, "What hot cheeks! That's making toast for these greedy voung creatures. The truth is that Ian suddenly remembered that of all people in the world she'd forgotten daddy's Christmas presenthadn't you, poppet? I suppose she's always thought of him as having presents by post. Anyhow, she hadn't much money, only pocket money for the next two weeks-I had to advance it and the sixpence you gave her, so we had a tremendous fuss to find anything,"

"What did you get, Jannie?" old Mrs. Gregory heard

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herself ask, and it seemed to her that the very tones of her voice must give away the secret; but like most happy, excited people, Ethel and the children were deaf and blind to the signs she gave in face and voice.

"I've got a perfectly scrumptious little book, with a pencil, for him to write in," said Jan. "He will like it, won't he, Gran? It's a red one."

"He always did like red." She thought of the gay paper packages hanging on John's Christmas tree, and of how he had written, "We've never had a Christmas tree, mums. Let's have one this year in my honour, all over red paper and candles and balls that shine."

"Sit down and take your teas, my dears; there's all the decorating to do, and you ought to go to bed early with Christmas Day in front of you."

"I'll go to bed early all right," Billy agreed. "I don't want to keep Santa Claus



hanging about waiting for me to go to sleep before he can come down the chimney. He might catch a cold, Jan, you think of that."

He looked across at his mother over Jan's head and laughed, for he knew quite well who Santa Claus was and loved to parade his knowledge without letting her into it.

"Ah, no, we mustn't let Santa Claus catch cold," said Ethel, and laughed, not because her remark was funny, but because John, her own dear John—more to her than all the world, more even, though it made her catch her breath half in fear and half in triumph to acknowledge it, than Billy and Jan—was coming back to her tomorrow. "Our Jack's come home from sea to-day," she hummed after tea, standing on the step-ladder, looping chains of coloured paper from picture to picture and tying mistletoe in a great bunch under the gas in the hall. Although she had not realized

it, she was conscious of something not quite as usual in old Mrs. Gregory's expression, and because of that looked down at her from the step-ladder, smiling.

"I know who daddy 'll kiss first under

the mistletoe."

"Me," said Jan.

"You, mummy," said Billy.

She shook her head.

"Granny!"

"You're a good girl, Ethel," said her mother-in-law that night when, long after the children were in bed, stockings filled to bursting, every possible preparation for the morrow made, they parted, candlesticks in hand, on the little landing outside their bedroom doors. "You ought to be happy if ever anyone was."

"I am." Ethel laughed, and then suddenly realized that for John's mother so much of all that made her happy had vanished from life long before she was her own age. Some realization she had never had before of the dauntless courage of that quiet little old woman, of her scrupulous fairness, her uncomplaining patience, came to her at that moment. "I wish I was as

brave as you are, Gran."

"You're brave enough," said the older woman. "Have a good night's rest! Your last, poor lassie, your last!" she added to herself. She knew, none better, the widow's nights of tears, and now she was to know the mother's. She had not wished her daughter-in-law a happy Christmas. For all her schemes that she should have one she could not bring her lips to frame that last

hypocrisy.

Lying awake, listening to the Christmas bells, watching a bright star peer down at her from frosty skies, old Mrs. Gregory wondered towards morning, when grief like life itself had flickered down a little, whether Ethel would ever forgive her for this deception. She knew that she herself would have found nothing harder to overlook than that someone, however loving, however wellintentioned, should keep her out of touch with her dear ones. It was possible that Ethel would reproach herself later on for every happy hour of that Christmas Day when John was dead, wondering how it was that she had not felt her sorrow shadowing her, even though unknown. But none of these considerations had the least effect on old Mrs. Gregory's resolution. She would give Ethel the telegram when the Christmas of Christmases was over and the children safe in bed and asleep, out of the way of the first dark wave of her sorrow, and, meanwhile, John had planned their happy Christmas for them, and the happiest of happy Christmases it should be.

She was early astir, even before the children woke, ran into their mother's room, and began to look into their crowded stockings in the faint light of the winter morning. She carried tea in to Ethel and joined in all the laughter and delight, sitting on the foot of the bed. She cooked a savoury breakfast. She saw them all off to church in their best, as merry and pretty a little family party as any going there that day, but she had to make the Christmas dinner and its cooking an excuse not to go with them.

"I thought we'd quite arranged it all so that you could come, granny."

"I can't just bring myself to leave that fine turkey in the oven, Ethel."

"Oh, you know I believe you think John may come early, and you are going to be the first with him."

"And if I was, didn't I have him first? Off you go, the three of you."

They trooped out laughing, and old Mrs. Gregory crept with trembling knees to her kitchen and hid her face.

"Oh, my boy, my boy," she cried, "if only it had been me that died, not you!"

Dinner and the fine turkey even surpassed expectations. There were crackers, there were chocolates, there were almonds and raisins, there was sitting all four round the fire, Billy leaning against his mother, Jan on her granny's knee, and mummy telling stories and singing little songs and asking riddles, and getting gayer and gayer and happier every moment, with flushed cheeks and bright eyes. Only sometimes, when footsteps came along the street, she would lose the thread of the story or falter in a song, looking out of the window until they had passed by.

Old Mrs. Gregory sat and listened and watched, and it seemed to her that the part she had chosen to play was the hardest thing she had done in all her life. The pain in her old heart, where Jan's little shining dark head lay, was like a wound, and all the while her mind struggled against accepting it, tried to trick and cheat her into letting herself believe that there was no fatal telegram in the pocket of her black leather bag, that the Southern Queen had come safely into port, and that at any moment the footsteps in the street might be her son's. It was as though she were



"She began to drag herself from her chair, but she could not stand. 'John!' she said. 'John!'"-p. 112

Drawn by John Camobell

two people, one in whom life had been cut down at the root by cruel tidings; one in whom the old happiness and the old hopes persisted still in spite of the mutterings of

despair.

Grief had wearied her so that she hardly knew where she was at some moments, and at others was devoured with a wild longing for the day to be over and herself free to tell Ethel, and to weep. By and by she must get up and go out to the wash-house and carry in the Christmas tree, John's Christmas tree, and tell them how he had planned it for them and hoped to be in time to bring it in himself, but she shrank from the ordeal. His name on her lips hurt her to-day for the first time since he had been born.

"John has missed the train—or it's late, that's likely, Christmas Day and all," said Ethel. "He will be disappointed if the children are in bed before he comes."

"They can't stay up too late, even on Christmas Day."

"Oh, granny!"

"It isn't for Christmas Day," said Jan, turning her little head and whispering in old Mrs. Gregory's ear, "it's for 'my son

John."

It was a little secret name her grandmother had told her once. It rang a thousand echoes down all her boy's life. It
broke the matchless courage which had faced
so much unflinchingly. The tears gathered
in old Mrs. Gregory's eyes. In another
moment, with wild weeping, the secret
would have been out; but through her tears
something moving in the shadows of the
firelit room, behind Ethel's dark head,
caught her attention. It was the door, the
door opening silently and the hall light
flashing on something silver and bright and

red. It was the Christmas tree there in the doorway behind Ethel's unconscious head, and someone was carrying it—a tall man in a thick, dark coat. Those shoulders, those hands, that gleam in short-cut hair, a glimpse of a face pale and lean but smiling above the silver Star of Bethlehem gleaming on the tree-top. John himself! He himself—though his body moved with the moving seas many a mile away—come back where his treasure was, come back to join them at the Christmas of Christmases. She began to drag herself up from her chair, setting Jan aside, but she could not stand.

"John," she said, "John!"

Ethel cried something aloud and sprang up, but her welcome was for a living man, no ghost, And old Mrs. Gregory was in her son's arms—the strong, warm arms of a

living man.

"Did I frighten you slipping round from the back like that, mother? Mother, dearest, was it that you heard about the Southern Queen? Didn't you get the second telegram? Oh, I suppose it got held up, being Christmas. A French fishing-boat took us off in the nick of time, but they hadn't wireless; we telegraphed the owners as soon as they landed us. Mother, dearest, I'm here, safe and sound, in time for Christmas with you all—mother!"

So old Mrs. Gregory had the first kiss under the mistletoe, and John's Christmas tree was the most magical, most wonderful that has ever been seen or heard about, and their Christmas one of the happiest that has ever been on earth since the birth of the Child made the first best Christmas of all. But for no one was it quite as it was for old Mrs. Gregory the Christmas of

Christmases.

ELEGENEE

A WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS

The best Christmas present for a boy or a girl is the winter volume of Little Folks (price 5s., or 6s. 6d. cloth covered). It is full of stories, pictures and articles that will indeed make a wonderful Christmas for the fortunate owner.

BUY HIM OR HER A VOLUME



The Christmas Heart Expression of the Christmas He

"England was merry England when
Old Christmas brought his sports again:
"Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale,
"Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;
A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
The poor man's heart for half a year,"

sang Scott a hundred years and more ago, and even then sang with a sigh of "the good old time," as of a golden period of which "some remnants" only lingered like belated snow patches in the April fields.

A Simpler Age

Yet that was a simpler age—do you remember Pleydell in "Guy Mannering"? Imagine a client to-day tracking a celebrated lawyer to a local tavern and discovering him there absorbed in "High Jinks." If such an age could feel so wistfully that the essence of Christmas was already escaping them—what of us to-day, with a hundred years of machinery toating between Scott's world and ours?

"A Christmas gambol oft could cheer The poor man's heart for half a year!"

Where is the Christmas Heart?

Can we say it now? Christmas survives as a children's orgy; but-be honest!-how many of our grown-up hearts does Christmas cheer for half a year? Don't we dread Christmas, most of us, because of its memories? Don't we heave a sigh of relief when the last of the baked meats, and with them the necessity of pretending to enjoy ourselves whether or no, are gone? Is not the Christmas of the modern Well-to-do like one of those once-flourishing concerns that have begun to live on their capital? Do the generations any longer add to the Christmas idea? Who nowadays writes carols to rival "When Joseph was a-walking," or "When shepherds watched their flocks by night"? What is the modern equivalent for a visit from the mummers? A box at No. No. Nanette? Do we open our windows and our hearts when the waits come round? Don't they come too often for our patience in the Christmas week? "The waits again! Hang the waits! Give them

sixpence to go away for the Lord's sake!"

"The Lord's sake!" Alas, alas! What has happened to our Christmas hearts?

I am afraid that the shops have stolen them away from us. Once the shops were content to act as passive priests of the temples of the Christmas mysteries. You went to them to obtain the Christmas necessaries certainly, even as one Scrooge did—

"It was a turkey! He could never have stood upon his legs, that bird! He would have snapped 'em off short in a minute like sealingwax!"

but having bought your material you created your Christmas at home. But the shops in the last years have commercialized Christmas. Gone the first Christmas thrill, far back in the year, with the fat pin-cushion dahlias still bright in the garden, of stirring the pudding in a washing tub-or at least it seemed like a washing tub to Half-Past-Four, perched on a kitchen chair, labouring with a wooden spoon as big as James's mussel-shell in the "Swiss Family Robinson." We buy our puddings nowadays, and we buy those pink and green paper garlands to loop diagonally across the ceiling, but once we made them of laurel leaves strung on twine and adorned them with pink paper roses that we made ourselves. We took some trouble for our Christmas, but do Joan and Peter make pink paper roses for the Christmas tree nowadays, make them laboriously, petal by petal? Does Peter know that dodge with the pocket-knife that makes them crinkly? Of course not, Joan and Peter couldn't be bothered. Alas for the Christmas heart that the shops have stolen away, and the legends that they have commercialized and the innocence that they have exploited in their abominable Christmas bazaars! What with their wadding snow and pennyworths of frost, their ready-filled Christmas stockings, crimson flannel travesties of the midnight mystery of St. Nicholas and the rest of their gross beslavering of the Christmas tradition, they have outraged, they have all but killed the Christmas heart.

Losing Our Birthright

We are losing our birthright and we ought to know it. Nature knows it: and to punish us (do you realize it?) she has in these latter years taken away the Christmas snow. It's no use your telling me that the change is a natural one. You may quote Bishop Percy and observe with him "that

the rivers in Gaul were regularly frozen over every year" a couple of thousand years ago, that "even the Tiber froze at Rome . . ." and that "Ovid assures us that the Black Sea was frozen annually," etc., and that the gradual warming up of Europe is a natural thing. Bother your scientific reasons! Do they make the situation better? I say that our snow is gone and that we are the worse for it, here in modern south England. For we have realized in the two rain-sodden years that preceded this blessed hot summer what it meant to do without sunshine, but I wonder if we realize that in just the same way our nerves are crying out for pure and lovely cold, for the vanished snow falling quietly in the dusk on Christmas Eve as it used to do, greeting us with its brilliant silence on a Christmas morning. Snow and sunshine are our two most beautiful possessions because they are so quiet, and we need quiet nowadays. Rain, the third sister, has a silver speech; but the silence of sunshine and snow is golden. What is Christmas without snow and sunshine? But if the snow is gone, gone to spoil April for us instead of glorifying Christmas, it is because we have first spoiled Christmas for the snow. Why deny it?

Have We Spoilt Christmas?

Have we not spoilt Christmas for ourselves, those of us who are not too "hard-up" to cram the Riviera express in Christmas week, or flee from the bother of Christmas to the all-accommodating hotels? We forget that Christmas is a poor man's feast, first celebrated in a humble place "because there was no room at the inn!"

"The Christmas gambol oft could cheer The poor man's heart for half a year!"

The Christmas heart is, has always been, warmest and gayest among those who know what pinching and scraping means.

"The Christmas heart!" You talk of it

"The Christmas heart!" You talk of it very glibly, you'll say to me but what exactly do you mean? What is a Christmas heart? Read me the recipe!

Why, it is composed of queer things—you cannot buy them in the shops! The peace of the snow, the song of the robin, the prick of the holly, the kiss of the mistletoe, the glory of the setting sun, the dance of the Yule log flames, the faith of a child hanging up its stocking, the charity of Wenceslas, the warmth that lingered in his foot-prints, the reverence of wise men, and the joy of a mother forgetting the anguish

THE CHRISTMAS HEART

because a child is born—of these things the Christmas heart is made.

I was once honoured by the friendship of an elderly lady, poor, alone in the world, who was dying of a slow and cruel illness. Yet her bedside was a centre of life: you met all London on her staircase, all restless, self-absorbed London, going there so obviously to be cheered, not to cheer. There was something very strange about that smiling, suffering woman's capacity to weep with those that wept and rejoice with those that rejoiced; but what made her able to do it I never comprehended till, one day, I heard another woman say of her quaintly: "She has a Christmas heart."

A Poor Man's Heart

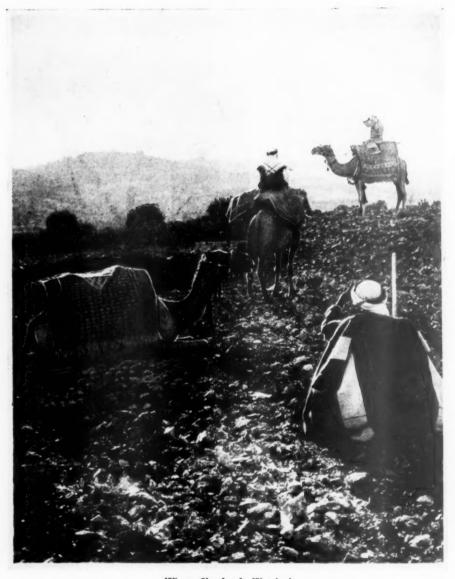
In those few words was her secret made clear, and clear to me, too, what we have nowadays lost sight of in our Christmas keeping. In the stampede after pleasure have we not forgotten that the Christmas heart rejoices because it remembers the meaning of pain, because it is born of the snow and the frightened darkness lighted by a star, because it remembers the pain of the Mother and the wail of the Child as well as the shouts of the heavenly host and the perfume and the glitter of the Wise Men's gifts. The Christmas heart is a poor man's heart: Christmas and the memory of Christmas can cheer such a heart till midsummer comes and a new Christmas can be looked forward to, because it has learned the Christmas lesson that no joy rings out clear as a Christmas bell without an under-note of pain to sharpen its sweetness, and that one cannot rid oneself of pain save by distilling from it-joy!

"Christmas comes but once a year.
And when it comes it brings good
cheer!"

Warmth in the cold season, food in the hungry season, lights in the dark season, a birthday at the death of the year—that is Christmas: the special festival of those who cheerfully know in their souls as well as their bodies what it means to "do without!"



"Snow and sunshine are our two most beautiful possessions because they are so quiet"



Where Shepherds Watched

A distant view of the town and hill of Bethlehem—a recent photo showing that, in spite of changes, the unchanging East still suggests the Christmas story.

The Call of the Shepherds

HAD tramped the narrow streets of Jerusalem, had seen its innumerable holy places and sacred sites, had strolled along the rampart of its ancient walls, and though the setting certainly carried the mind back to some of the most momentous days in the world's history, I, nevertheless, felt there was something lacking. The constant traffic, the whirl of motor-cars, and the huge modern buildings that crowd close up to the old walls seemed out of place. It was a distinct clash of the ancient and the modern, and, what was more, the Biblical atmosphere which one expects to encounter in the world's most sacred city was lost.

It was while in this contemplative mood that one of my friends of the American colony, Mr. G. E. Matson, suggested a trip to the gorge of the Ain Farah. Mr. Matson is a keen photographer, a true artist, and a lover of the picturesque. Furthermore, he knows the country, the people and their customs. He is ever seeking not only to portray the true life of the common people, but in doing so to throw light and understanding on the Bible story.

An Early Start

Next morning we breakfasted early, and at six o'clock started off on a couple of donkeys, laden with cameras and our needs for the day. We followed the main road up Mount Scopus, which is virtually a continuation of the ridge of Olivet. At the War Cemetery, which marks the resting-place of 5,000 British soldiers, we left the road and turned sharply to the left across a patch of withered grass. It was a magnificent view of the Holy City that lay behind us shimmering in the early-morning sun, for it was the month of June and very hot.

We soon struck a rough track winding in and out among the mountain tops. A few minutes' riding brought us to the village of Anata, which corresponds to the ancient Anathoth, the birthplace of Jeremiah. We had hardly come within sight of the village before our presence was announced by the barking of dogs. With the exception of some ruins of an old building, probably a

Heroes of the First Christmas Morn By Harold J. Shepstone

church, there is nothing attractive about the village. It is a mere cluster of mud dwellings dominated by a solitary minaret. The road, if such it can be called, twisted in and out among the houses, so narrow in places that we had to pass in single file.

The Mountains of Moab

As we emerged from the village, which is situated on the top of a broad hill, we could plainly detect the blue waters of the Dead Sea and the Mountains of Moab beyond, rising peak after peak, barren and rugged and unrelieved by the slightest touch of verdure. It was upon such a scene of dreary desolation as this that the author of Lamentations gazed with tearful eyes two thousand five hundred years ago. True, the



The shepherd boy with his sling

awe-inspiring picture is tempered by the colours reflected by the sunlight. The tips of the nearby peaks were bathed in a beautiful gold. One of the charms of Palestine is its colours, mountains, hills, valleys and streams presenting a panorama of colours, ever changing according to the position of the sun. Now the descent of the gorge began. It was barren, stony, and withal very steep. There seemed to be no defined

path, and I allowed the donkey to pick his own way. The small stones gave way to huge boulders, and in some places the gradient must have been fifty in a hundred, and one had to sit well back to keep in the saddle.

Fourteen Hundred Feet Deep

We were going down, down all the time, and I began to wonder when we should reach the bottom. My friend informed me that the gorge was fourteen hundred feet deep. Presently the going became so rough and even dangerous that we dismounted, and continued our journey on foot. It was at this point that the bottom of the valley burst into view. It was like a tiny oasis in a setting of barren, rugged rocks.

There is a spring here, and the silvery stream that flows for some distance through the gorge is lined here and there with little gardens, where fruits and vegetables are grown. This little rivulet is the popular gathering-place of the shepherds of the surrounding hill country of Judea, and is generally accepted as the scene of David's boyhood experiences in shepherd life. At the head of the spring, which appeared to gush out from a tumbled mass of rocks, a couple of Bedouin women were washing clothes by dipping them in the water and pounding them with stones. A couple of men were also busy here erecting a dwelling for the owner of the gardens, which spoke of the new feeling of security that has gripped the peasants since the coming of the British. For a man to have dared to erect an isolated dwelling in pre-war days, far from any village, would have been accepted as a challenge to the honesty of his neighbours. Near the spring, nestling close against the perpendicular face of the gorge,

we noticed the remains of an old monastery, immediately above which were some caves, where robbers are said to have hidden. It is impossible to reach the entrance to these caverns without a ladder.

Under the shade of one of the trees, with the little stream flowing past our feet, we partook of our lunch, rested awhile, and then made our way down the gorge. It was as if some titanic hand had rent the mountains here. We had to climb over massive rocks and huge boulders, sometimes finding ourselves on one side of the stream and then on the other.

Then my friend pointed to what looked like moving specks away up on the stony slopes of the mountains. It was the shepherds coming down with their sheep and goats. From time



Photo: American Colony, Jerusalem

"Watching their Flocks by Night"

THE CALL OF THE SHEPHERDS



Photo: American Colony, Jerusalem

"He leadeth them beside the still waters"

immemorial they have done this. Here they water their flocks, rest from the noonday heat in the shadow of the rocks, and then ascend the gorge again to their pastures. It was a never-to-be-forgotten picture. By midday, when the sun was at its highest, there were over a score of shepherds here and many hundreds of sheep and goats. There was a picturesqueness as well as a rugged grandeur about these sons of the hillside. They wore camelhair cloaks of bright colours, and white kerchiefs with black bands on their heads. Many of them carried firearms. They took little notice of us until my friend, who speaks Arabic, approached them. As we chatted and moved about among the flocks I quickly discovered that these wild-looking men of the open country possessed a dignity and a gentleness that was decidedly attractive. They tend their flocks to-day in much the same way as did David of old.

The Shepherd's Staff

They were all armed, some with rifles and others with the conventional staff, because their calling is an honourable one, and weapons are necessary to drive away prowling beasts that attack the flocks at night. A shepherd's staff is a very heavy

club, often with a head studded with nails, made of the hardest wood, and of formidable shape. A hole is bored through the lighter end, the handle, so that it may be attached by a piece of string to the girdle, or when used as a weapon round the wrist.

I also noticed the shepherd's rod, the end of which is forked or bent. When the shepherd brings home his sheep and leads them to the fold, he often stands at the entrance, places the rod across the doorpost, so that each sheep goes under the rod, and when one needs special treatment the rod descends and catches the sheep by the leg, to receive extra care and attention. Here we perceive the meaning of David's allusion when he said: "Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me."

The silence of the gorge had now given way to the braying of sheep, the bleating of goats, and the shouts of the shepherds. Very soon the sheep and goats were all mixed up as one huge flock, stretching a considerable distance down the gorge, some drinking, some resting under the shadow of the rocks, and others nibbling at the scanty pasturage. To the Westerner it is surprising what the sheep and goats find to live upon, for the hillsides where they graze are very barren and stony. Hence the



Entrance to the Church of the Nativity, Jerusalem
The lowly door is to teach humility---or to keep the cattle out!

shepherd is always looking for fresh pasturage.

I detected one of the shepherd boys making a sling. He had taken a little bunch of wool from the back of one of the sheep, and with the aid of only a smooth stone converted the yarn into a sling. With this weapon he becomes expert in throwing stones at a great distance, and with much precision. It not only serves as a weapon of defence, but when a sheep has wandered off and will not return at his call, he will drop a stone just beyond it, and this at once has the desired effect. It was with such a primitive weapon as this that David slew Goliath. When the sheep had settled down many of the shepherds pulled out their flutes and played. These are simply hollow reeds, pierced with a few holes and fitted with a mouthpiece. With such a flute a shepherd will play to himself and his sheep for hours together. His repertoire may be very limited, but in that wild gorge the sounds were distinctly sweet and cheerful.

In the late afternoon, when the heat of the sun began to wane, there was a distinct stir among the shepherds. They began slowly to ascend the gorge, everyone taking

slightly different direction. They simply strolled away with staff in hand, shouting as they climbed the steep bank, "Tahho! Tah-ho!" short and sharp, not even stopping and looking back until they had moved some distance up the mountain side. As the sheep heard the voices so they moved away from their resting - places, some going to this shepherd and others to another, and so on. Not only does a shepherd know his sheep. but the sheep know his voice, and instinctively follow after him when he calls.

I thought of the shepherds next morning as I drove to Bethlehem, for were they not the heroes of the first Christmas morn? My guide on this oc-

casion was Mr. E. Meyers, of the American colony, a delightful companion, who has spent his life in Palestine, and knows the country like a book. While Jeru-salem has adopted many modern innovations, and boasts of its water supply, telephone service and such-like blessings of civilization, Bethlehem, nestling among its olive groves and orchards, has remained unchanged. The very dress of its women and the mode of life of its inhabitants is that of the period of the Crusaders. We passed the Well of the Magi, associated with the wise men, where women were busy washing clothes; Rachel's Tomb, and, as we neared our goal, the well from which David's three mighty men brought him water at the risk of their lives. Bethlehem was the home of Boaz and Naomi, of Jesse and David, and here was consummated the beautiful idyll of the Book of Ruth.

The Church of the Nativity

Its great attraction is that venerable pile, the Church of the Nativity, probably the oldest Christian edifice extant, which stands over the grotto marking the inn where our Saviour was born. The first thing I noticed

THE CALL OF THE SHEPHERDS

was that the new feeling of security had invaded its sacred precincts, for the ugly stone wall or screen which had divided the nave from the transept in the Greek portion of the church had been removed. The screen was put up many years ago by the Greeks to prevent cattle from straying round its altar. In the old days the Moslems thought nothing of driving sheep and goats into the church, more particularly if the weather was bad. That is the reason why the entrance is so small, and one has to stoop to enter. One can notice the marks round the beautiful pillars of the nave to which the animals were tied.

Religious Rivalry

Then the ridiculous religious rivalry, largely encouraged and fostered by the Turks in pre-war days, has given place to reason and a spirit of moderation. Here, as in so many of these historic churches which mark holy sites, many sects worship—Latins, Greeks, Armenians, Copts, Abyssinians, etc.

The place in the sacred building which each sect occupies, the duration and manner of their services, even to the number of times they could burn incense, as well as that portion of the church each sect could clean and regard as their own, were all dictated by imperial decrees from Constantinople.

If one could have peeped into the church in pre-war days one would have detected unwashed windows, empty chains dangling from the roof, which were evidently intended to carry a lamp, carpets leading to adjoining vestries and monasteries cut in the most extraordinary way, sections of staircases and portions of walls badly in need of renovation, and such-like sights amid order and neatness; and in connexion with each there was a story of strife to relate. The priests of the rival sects could not agree, or questioned the claim to clean this window, use this chain, walk over this portion of the church, with the result that the Turks, having little sympathy for the Christian religion, and believing that they should encourage such rivalry, forbade anyone touching the disputed areas, and so they were left as they were.

When Christmas came the Turks were in the habit of sending a draft of five hundred Turkish soldiers to Bethlehem, which they declared was necessary to preserve order during the Christmas festivities.

What the British authorities did was to send for the dignitaries of the church, inform them there would be no guards in future, and that they themselves would be held personally responsible for good behaviour and for the maintenance of order, and it must be admitted it has worked wonders.

A circular staircase from the transept of the church leads down to the grotto, which is forty feet long, twelve feet wide, and ten feet high. Although it is lit by many lamps, it was fortunate that my guide had armed himself with a candle, for the light in the grotto is very dim. The walls are lined with marble, and the floor is paved with the

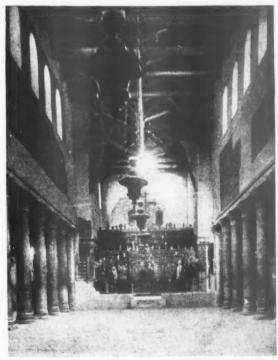


Photo : American Colonu, Jerusalem

Interior of the Church of the Nativity

same material, the roof being the bare rock. At the bottom of the staircase is an altar surrounded by elaborate embroideries. Under the altar is a silver star let into the floor, marking the spot of the immaculate birth. Over the star burn fifteen lamps, of which six belong to the Greeks, five to the Armenians and four to the Latins. It is impossible to gaze at the star and the everburning lamps without one's thoughts being carried back to the greatest event in the world's history, for it has been truly said that the birth of Christ was the world's second birthday.

Now, death is life, and grief is turned to joy! Since glory shone on that auspicious morn, When God incarnate tame, not to destroy, But man to save and manhood's state adorn!

Opposite the altar there are three steps leading down to the Chapel of the Manger, where, it is said, was the stall containing the manger in which the Virgin Mother laid her child. The spot is marked now by a marble manger containing a wax effigy of the infant, and hung with lamps. Behind the wire screen is a beautiful painting of the Nativity, by Schmalz. The original manger is shown in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, in Rome, whither it is said to have been transferred in the eighth century.

There has, of course, been no little controversy as to whether this is the actual site of the original manger. It is underground, and the visitor from the West wonders how it could have been used by cattle and horses. But this argument does not hold good. It is obvious, of course, that there was another entrance originally, but, as a matter of fact, the present staircase could be climbed without difficulty by the native mules and donkeys. The credibility of this tradition is supported by no less an authority than Conder, who observes: "The rude grotto

with its rocky manger may, it seems to me, be accepted even by the most sceptical of modern ex-

plorers.

Not far from the church is the Milk Grotto, or Women's Cavern, a cave which the Virgin Mary is said to have used as a retreat. It is said that the Holy Family once took shelter in the cavern, and the Virgin, when nursing her child, dropped a little milk on the floor, which imparted to the chalky rock of which the cavern is formed, the virtue of increasing mothers' This superstitious belief is shared by Christians and Moslems alike, who believe that this dust will increase the milk of Little even animals. round cakes are made, mixed with the powdered stone, and sold to pilgrims. And not far away is the so-called Shepherd's Fields, and as I gazed over them in the setting sun I detected the shepherds gathering their sheep into the folds of the night.



Photo: American Colony, Jerusalem

Main Street of Bethlehem



"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death-"

THE PROPER PLACE by O. DOUGLAS

SYNOPSIS OF OPENING CHAPTERS

In one of Hans Andersen's tales he tells how at a dinner party one of the guests played on a flute made from a willow in the ditch, and behold everyone was immediately wafted to his or her proper place. "Everything in its proper place," sang the flute, and the humptions host flew into the herdsman's cottage—you know the story. Nicole Rutheriurd thought of it as she looked at Mrs. Jackson, a rather stout, middle-aged lady, wife of a Glasgow man who was making money fast, and who thought that he ought to live in a big house in the country. Mrs. Jackson had come to inspect Rutherfurd House, which Lady Jane Rutherfurd found herself forced to dispose of now that Sir Walter Rutherfurd had been in his grave three months and the lean years had come. The Rutherfurd drawing room with its old-world atmosphere cast a spell upon the heholder, and it certainly seemed incongruous to imagine the plump Mrs. Jackson as mistress of the house. But times had changed, and in due course the Jacksons were installed in the big house in the country, whilst Lady Jane and her two daughters, Babs and Nicole, moved out.

installed in the big nouse in the country, which Lady facts and her to design the property of their former splendour, and after much search alighted on a curious little place called Harbour House in the town of Kirkmeikle in Fife. It was a tall, white-washed house, on the sea front. The front door was in the street; to the harbour it presented a long front punctuated with nine small-paned windows; the roof was high and pointed, and Barbara and Nicole when they visited it at once fell in love with the place. They arranged to keep on the middle-aged woman who was caretaking, and began to look forward keenly to their new life, despite

CHAPTER V

"Oh, but her beauty gone, how lonely Then will seem all reverie, How black to me." Walter de la Mare.

T was late in the evening before Nicole and her cousin reached home after their day in Kirkmeikle.

Mrs. Douglas from Kingshouse had been dining with Lady Jane, and was still there when the girls came in.

She was a woman frankly middle-aged, slim, upright, with white hair rolled back in a style of her own from a small, high-coloured face. Her eyes were intensely blue, shrewd, kind eyes, quickly kindled in anger, easily melted to tears. One of the most striking things about Jean Douglas was her instinct for dress. Her clothes were perfect in every detail, and whether she was on the top of a hill with her dogs, or at a point-to-point meeting, at a country-house luncheon party (this is a great test) or in a London ballroom, she always looked exactly right.

She kissed the two girls with affection, but her words were severe. "You two stupid creatures, coming home at this time of night! Why didn't you stay in Edinburgh? I've been scolding your mother, Nicole, for not insisting; but well I know you're the real culprit. Your mother and Barbara are dragged at your chariot-wheels."

Nicole smiled forgivingly at her friend. "Don't be nasty, Mistress Jean, when Babs and I are perishing with hunger. We had only a snatched cup of tea in Edinburgh, and we kept falling asleep in the train and got so cold. Johnson," to that dignitary who had come into the room, "is our hamand-egg tea ready? Good. . . I ordered that as a great treat after our long day. Come with us, my dears, and watch us eat. We've got heaps to tell you."

At first they talked of other things. Nicole wanted to know how her mother had spent the day, asked for all the news from Kingshouse. She seemed completely to have forgotten the weariness of her long day, and ate her meal with relish.

"Babs," she said, "don't you think this is the perfectest sort of meal? If I had my

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will I'd always have high tea. We got such a horrid luncheon at Kirkmeikle—very late, when we had ceased to feel hungry. It was in a pot-house of sorts, and we got soup out of a tin (I think) and roast beef that had been hot about an hour before, so couldn't be described exactly as cold—I felt like St. Paul and the Laodiceans! The room smelt like a channel steamer, and the tablecloth felt damp to the touch. Kirkmeikle doesn't shine in the way of inns; we would need to warn people of that, which brings us to the point—we hope we've got a house there."

Lady Jane said "Oh!" and gave a faint

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Her daughter caught her hand. "I know. Doesn't it seem to make things horribly final somehow? I don't think I really believed we were leaving Rutherfurd until we sent the wire to Mr. Haynes asking him to take the Harbour House, if possible."

"And where is this house?" Mrs. Douglas asked crossly. "I can't tell you how disgusting I consider your conduct. It's a poor compliment to your friends that you should want to put the sea—or at least the Firth of Forth—between us—I mean between them and you."

Nicole spread some jam on a piece of bread and butter.

"Blame me, my dear, me only."

"It's you I am blaming. What's your idea in rushing to Fife?"

"Can't find a house anywhere nearer."

"Nonsense!"

"Oh, all right."

"You know very well," Mrs. Douglas went on, "that the Langlands are most anxious that you should take the Cottage. You couldn't find a more charming little place, suitable in every way, and you would have all your friends round you."

Nicole looked at her friend. "Why, Mistress Jean, I never knew you lacking in imagination before. Can't you see that it wouldn't be exactly pleasant for us to stay on here and see strangers in Rutherfurd? We must go to some place where we won't

always be reminded of the Jacksons. . . ."
"The weelched creatures," broke in Jean
Douglas so bitterly that the inmates of comfortable Deneholm might well have wilted.
. . . "But I flattered myself that the fact
of having all your friends round might
weigh against the other. I was mistaken,
it seems."

"Now don't be sneisty, my dear. You don't suppose we leave you willingly, do

you?... Babs, we must tell about the house. You begin with the plain facts and I'll add the embroideries later."

Barbara poured herself out a cup of tea and declined to do her cousin's bidding. "Go on yourself," she said. "When you get

too exaggerated I'll interrupt."

"Starting from the Waverley," Nicole began, rather in the style of a guide-book, "it is quite a pretty run-I had forgotten how pretty-and not very long. meikle we found to be a funny little steep town of red-tiled houses tumbling down to the harbour. I won't disguise from you that there is a row of atrocious new red villas standing in a line above the town, and we quailed when we saw them, fearing that our quest would lead us to them. no. We were directed down the long, winding street, and at the foot we found a tall, white-washed house with crow-step gables and a pointed roof and nine windows looking out to the sea."

"Surrounded," broke in Barbara, "with ordinary fishermen's cottages and a very strong smell of tar and fish, and small,

dirty children."

"Why not?" asked Nicole. "I've always wanted to rub shoulders more with my fellow-men, and now I'll get the chance. And mother won't mind, will you, mum? To my mind it's infinitely preferable to villadom."

"I think it sounds nice and unusual," Lady Jane said, "but I hope you asked if

the drains were all right."

"We forgot," said Nicole, "but I expect they're all right, for there are two excellent bathrooms fitted up with every sort of contrivance. And Barbara insisted on hearing Would you about the hot-water supply. rather have a bedroom looking to the sea or up the brae, Mums? The best room, the largest that is, is on the land side; but we'll decide that later. The drawing-room is a pet of a room, I know you'll love it, and the furniture from the corner room will be exactly right for it. . . . I planned it all the moment I saw it. The Russian figures will stand on the mantelshelf just as they do here, and your little portraits will hang in a row above them. And the old French clock that plays a tune must be there. And the Ming figures in their own cabinet. They will be quite in keeping with the Harbour House: all seaport towns are full of china brought from far places. . . . Of course the dining-room furniture is hopeless, but I was thinking, coming

out in the train, that the things in the summer parlour would be perfect in that sea-looking room. The Chippendale sideboard and table and chairs, the striped silk curtains and the Aubusson carpet will make it a thing of beauty."

Mrs. Douglas turned to Barbara. "Nicole's as pleased as a child with a

doll's house."

Barbara shrugged her shoulders, "It is a doll's house."

Nicole protested. "It's so beautifully proportioned that it isn't a bit cramped: the rooms are all of a decent size, and what can you possibly want more than a room to feed in, a room to talk and read and sew in, a room to sleep in?" She turned to her mother again. "You can't imagine, mother, what a homelike little house it is. It must always have been lived in by people with nice thoughts-decent people. . . . The cook showed us over, the sort of cook that is born, not made; you couldn't imagine her anything else, with a round, rosy face and a large expanse of white apron. Thirty years she had served old Mrs. Swinton in the Harbour House. Of course I told her she must remain with us. Babs thought I was mad, before we had time to ask for references or anything, but her face was her reference. Mrs. Agnes Martin. That is your new cook, Mums." She turned to Mrs. Douglas, "To find a house and cook both in one day! That was pretty clever, don't you think, in these degenerate days?"

"I should like to know more about both before I congratulate you," her friend said cautiously as she rose to go, "I ordered the car at ten-thirty and it must be long past that. Well—I'm glad you

seem satisfied--"

"Satisfied," said Barbara with a groan, while Lady Jane sighed.

Mrs. Douglas turned to get her cloak.

"And what," she asked, "is to happen to all the furniture you can't get into this new house?"

"Oh," said Nicole with an air of great carelessness, "didn't you know that the lacksons are taking over the rooms as they stand?"

"What?" She stood staring at Nicole, who held her cloak. "Those heavenly old things! But not the portraits, surely? Not your Lovely Lady?" She looked from one to the other of the three women but no one spoke. "Give me my cloak, Nicole." And as the girl wrapped her in it she said, with

cears standing in her angry blue eyes: "It was bad enough to think of you being away, but I never dreamed of you being separated from your treasures. Nobody knows what Rutherfurd has been to me, not only because I loved every one of you, but because that room in there was to me a sort of shrine. You know "-she turned to Nicole -"how the summer sun about six o'clock strikes through the west window and falls on the picture? I used to plan to be there to see it. . . . And now that fat woman tricked out in silly finery will sit there by the fire and the shrine is desecrated; things that were lovely are made common and unclean. . . . Find my handkerchief, can't you, Nikky? It's in my bag. . . . What a fool I am!" She threw her arms round Lady Jane.

"I'm a Job's comforter, aren't I? Bildad the Shuhite should be my name! But I promise you Mrs. Jackson won't enjoy her ill-gotten gains. She will sit in lonely

splendour, I'll see to that."

"No, no," Lady Jane protested. "Indeed, Jean, I want you to be kind to her as only you know how to be kind. You are far the humanest person in these parts. Make things easy for her."

"Not I. Things have been made far too

easy for her as it is."

"But, my dear," Nicole cried. "If it hadn't been the Jacksons it would have been someone else-probably very objectionable, pretentious people. In a way the Jacksons are benefactors. They have saved these things for Rutherfurd when they might have had to be scattered abroad. Exerything in its proper place, Mistress Jean. You remember your Hans Andersen? Out we go, swept by the great broom of Fate. Exit the Rutherfurds: Enter the Jacksons!"

Jean Douglas put both hands over her

ears.

"Don't say it; I hate their very name. And how I shall hate them when I see them in the flesh!"

"No," said Nicole; "I defy you to hate Mrs. Jackson."

Late that night, when everyone was in bed and the house very still, a light figure slipped downstairs into the dark drawingtoom.

Quietly she pulled back the curtains and undid the shutters. Outside a full moon was shedding its ghostly light. How strange and dreamlike it looked, so distinct and yet so unreal—the wild thorns with their bare branches, the glimmer of the



"'And what,' she asked, 'is to happen to all the furniture you can't get into this new house?'"

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Drawn by John Cameron

burn, the lawns like tapestry. Somewhere up in the Lammerlaw a wild bird cried strangely. Near the house an owl hooted. Nicole drank in the beauty thirstily. It was as if she were fixing it on her mind against a time when she would no longer behold it.

Presently she turned and went over to the fireplace.

In the moonlight the picture gleamed palely. The "Queen of Hearts" looked down on the girl kneeling on the fender-stool. It was nothing to her that the upturned face was very pale and wet with tears.

CHAPTER VI

" Of many good I think him best."

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

JACKSON bought Rutherfurd practically as it stood. He grumbled loudly at the sum it cost him, but in his heart he was as well pleased as the buyer in Proverbs: "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer, but when he goeth away he boasteth." The house was what he had always vaguely dreamed of, always desired to attain to, for he had a real love and appreciation of beautiful things. He did not try to deceive himself about his own or his wife's fitness for their position, he knew they might be rather absurd in this new setting, his hopes were built on his son. Andrew, he determined, would play the part of the young laird and play it well. There was no need for him to trouble the Glasgow office much; he must shoot, and fish, and take to all country sports. His father had a picture of him in his mind's eye going about in knickerbockers, with dogs, a member of the County Council, on friendly terms with the neighbouring landowners. And, of course, he would marry some nice girl of good family and carry on the name of Jackson. There was nothing to be ashamed of in the name, it stood for straightness and integrity. Jackson of Rutherfurd-it sounded well, he thought.

Mrs. Jackson, though very much excited at the thought of the change, was beset with fears. She called on all her friends and broke to them with a sort of fearful joy the news that the Jacksons were about to become "county." They were all very nice and sympathetic except Mrs. McArthur, who was frankly pessimistic and inclined to be rude.

Mrs. Jackson would not have cared so

much had it been one of her more recent friends who had taken up this attitude, but she had known Mrs. McArthur all her life and had always admired and respected her greatly.

"You're leaving Glasgow, I hear," she said coldly the first time Mrs. Jackson went to see her after the great step had been taken.

"Have you heard?" that lady asked blankly. "I came to-day to tell you."

"Bad news travels fast," said Mrs. McArthur, sitting solidly in a high chair and surveying her friend as if she were seeing her in an entirely new light.

Mrs. McArthur was a powerful-looking woman with a large, white, wrinkled face. She belonged to an old Glasgow family and loved her city with something like passion. Holding fast to the past she had an immense contempt for modern ways and all innovations.

"Ucha," Mrs. Jackson began nervously, "Mr. Jackson's bought a place and we're leaving Glasgow for good. It's a wrench to leave a place where you were born and brought up and married and lived near sixty years in—— And I'm fond of Glasgow. It's a fine, hearty place, and I'd like to know where you'd find a prettier, greener suburb than Pollokshields."

Her hostess said nothing, so she went on, talking rapidly. "And the shops and all and concerts and theatres; we'll miss a lot, but still—Rutherfurd's a fine place and not that awful far away. I really don't know how I'll get on at all, entertaining and all that, and a butler, and taking my place as a county lady, but I'll just have to do my best. If only I'd had a daughter! What a help she'd be now! But it's no good blaming Providence, and Andy's a good boy to me."

She smoothed down her lap and sighed, while Mrs. McArthur gave a sniff and said:

"Well, I think you're making a mistake. Some people are fitted for a country life and some aren't. I'd hate it myself. We go to Millport every summer for July and August, and the coast's bright compared to the country, steamers and what not, but two months is more than enough for me. Indeed, I wouldn't go away at all if it weren't that I value town all the more when I get back." She watched a maid nut a large plump teapot on the tray before her and covered it with a tea-cosy em-

broidered with wild roses, and then continued: "A coast house is bad enough, but how anybody can buy 'a place,' as they call it, a house away at the end of an avenue, removed from all mankind, dreary beyond words—" She lifted her eyes to the ceiling in mute wonder, while Mrs. Jackson cleared her throat uncomfortably.

"Well, but, Mrs. McArthur," she began, "some people like the country, you know,

and-"

"Some people have queer tastes, Mrs. Jackson. Look at the people that are always going away about the North Pole!"

Mrs. Jackson failed to see the connexion, but she murmured "That's so" in a depressed tone, then, more brightly, added: "You couldn't call Rutherfurd cold; rather sheltered it is, with flowers blooming away like anything still, and we're putting in central heating—can you believe it, they had done all these years without it? Luckily, there's electric light."

"There is? Well, I prefer gas myself," Mrs. McArthur looked complacently round at the incandescent mantles in pink globes, then began to pour out the tea. "Will the

house need much?"

Her guest, glad of this slight show of in-

terest, responded volubly.

"All the bedrooms need new paper and paint. The Rutherfurds were never very well off for their position, and money's been getting scarcer with them every year. The hall and the public rooms will be left with all the furniture just as they are; they're panelled, you know. . . ." She leaned forward impressively. "Mrs. McArthur, would you believe it? There's no carpet on the stairs."

"Fancy! As poor as all that, are they? It's a good thing you've got a handsome one to lay down. It's just about two years

since you got it."

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Mrs. Jackson nodded. "Two years past in September. It is rich, isn't it? I'm awful fond of crimson, and it's a really good carpet made for us, but"...she hesitated and glanced deprecatingly at her friend... "all the same, I don't think we'll put it down at Rutherfurd. It's not the thing if you've got a fine old staircase—antique, you know, to cover it."

Mrs. McArthur laid down her tea-cup, and after a moment's pause addressed her old friend, gazing at her the while as if she had suddenly observed in her some new and unpleasing trait.

"I must say I'm surprised at you, Bella

Jackson, giving in to that sort of thing at your time of life! It's all very well for artists, it's part of their trade to be daft like, but I never thought to see you with a stair like a perpetual spring cleaning."

"Oh, not as bad as that; you don't miss a carpet somehow; the bare steps are all of a piece with the rest of the house. You

must come and see for yourself."
"I'll not do that," Mrs. McArthur said

with great decision.

"Oh, mebbe you will. The house is empty now. Lady Jane Rutherfurd and her daughter and niece have taken a small house in Fife. I'm sorry for them, I am indeed. It's not very easy to rise in the world, but it must be worse to come down. I'm going to ask the daughter to visit me. She's an awful nice girl with no airs at all. I think Andy 'Il like her, and she'll be a great help to me, for goodness knows what I'll do when

all the people come to call!"

She sighed as she rose to go, and Mrs. McArthur, remaining seated, said, "Well, I'm glad I'm not in your place. You'll only regret once leaving Pollokshields and that'll be all the time. But wha will to Cupar mann to Cupar. I always knew your husband was a climber. Many a time I've said to myself, 'Look at that wee Jackson worming himself in here and there, doing public work for his own ends, thinking he'll get a knighthood out of it.' . . . But you were always an honest soul, Bella, and to hear you talking about 'the county' and 'Lady Jane' and not putting on a stair carpet makes me fair sick. You can tell your husband from me that a queer sight he'll be as a laird."

She laughed unpleasantly and rose to her feet, while Mrs. Jackson, flushed and distressed, meekly held out her hand.

"Well, good-bye, you'll be far too grand to remember me when you're the lady of Rutherfurd. I'll miss you, and I'll miss Andy—what does he say about all this?"

But Mrs. Jackson murmured something and fled from the place where so often she had found rest and refreshment, feeling that she had, in very truth, been wounded in the house of her friend.

What Andrew Jackson thought of the change no one ever heard. That young man was not given to confiding his feelings to the world at large. He was respectful to his parents—oddly so in this disrespectful age—but if he sometimes did permit himself to smile at them both no one knew. He was an ordinary looking young man,



neither tall nor short, with frank eyes and a pleasant smile. His mother thought him wonderfully handsome.

In the war he had won a well-deserved Military Cross, and since coming home to his father's business much of his spare time had been spent helping with various schemes to benefit the boys and young men of his own city.

Sitting with his mother in her very own parlour one evening before they left Dene-holm for good, he looked round the room, which with all its ugliness had an air of homely comfort about it, and said, "You've been happy here, mother."

Mrs. Jackson, who was tidying out a large work-basket, looked up at the question.

Andrew was lying back in one of the shabby red velvet chairs, smoking a pipe and watching his mother. She loved to sit so with her son. Her husband was always busy, out at a meeting or a public dinner, or looking over papers in his own room, but Andy spent many evenings in "the parlour."

"Happy, Andy? Yes, of course I've been happy."

She spoke in an abstracted way, her attention obviously still in the work-basket. Presently she held out a photograph, saying, "It's queer to come across something you haven't seen for years. It's a school group. That's me, that fat one in the front with the curls. Eh, my, my! I couldn't sleep wondering what I'd be like, and I got such a disappointment."

Her son studied the faded picture gravely. "Where was this taken, mother?" he

asked.

"At the first school I was ever at, a private school in Myrtle Park. My home was in Crosshill, of course. We sat on benches in an upper room and learned out of we paper books. There were pictures to help us on, and I remember getting a rap over the fingers for spelling tub—bucket. I wore a white pinafore. Children never wear pinafores now. I dare say they're neater, but I don't know—there was something awful fresh about a clean pinny."

She was disentangling some silks and rolling them neatly on cards as she talked.

"The master was a queer man. I forget how it came up in the class one day, but he was talking about servants of God, and he said to me, 'Bella, have you ever sen a servant of God?' I said I had not, and he told me to come out into the middle of the floor and he solemnly shook hands with me and said, 'Now you can say you've

shaken hands with a servant of God.' But, of course, I was thinking of prophets with long white beards. Jeremiah, you know."

"Of course," said Andrew.

"It was a queer Glasgow in those days. Crosshill was like a village and there was a long stretch of vacant ground from it to Eglinton Toll. You'll hardly mind of it like that. And at the foot of Myrtle Park there were big pools or bogs or something that we could skate on in winter. And there were only horse-cars going in and out to town, and they didn't go farther than the park gate. . . . I stayed at the Myrtle Park school till I was ten, and then I went to another private school in Kelvinside till I was seventeen, but I don't think I ever learned much. I got engaged to your father when I was twenty. He was a deacon in the church we went to and read papers at the literary society. He took to walking home with me from meetings and dropping in to supper, but it was long before I could believe he meant anything, for, you see, I wasn't clever, and he was a promising young man. We weren't married for some years, because, of course, we had to save, but I was awful happy making my things and going out with your father to concerts and socials."

She stopped to deal patiently with a very tangled skein, and her son asked where their

first house had been.

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"D'you not remember it, Andy? Uch, you must. We left it when you were six. It was called Abbotsford, a house in Maxwell Road, a semi-detached villa, just six rooms and kitchen. We had been married five years when you came, so I can tell you we were glad to see you. And your father was getting on well, and in time he bought Deneholm. It seemed an awful lift in the world to me! We had just the one girl at Abbotsford, and we started here with three experienced women. My! I was miserable with them for a while: I always thought they were laughing to each other when I went into the kitchen, and so they were, mebbe, but I got used to it, and you've to live a long time after you're laughed at. The Rutherfords' butler's staying on with us; that's a comfort, for he'll keep the other servants in order. He wanted to go with Lady Jane, quite the old family servant in a book, but they said they couldn't do with him in a small house. Miss Nicole said to me that it would never do for them to have a butler in Kirkmeikle, it would be 'trailing clouds of glory,' though what she meant by that I don't know. It's a hymn, isn't it? That's the worst of people like the Rutherfurds, you don't know half they mean; they so seldom talk sense. I can discuss a subject quite well if people 'll stick to it, but when they suddenly fly off and quote things— I want to ask you, Andy, d'you think I'll ever be able to take my place at Rutherfurd?"

She did not wait for an answer, but went

on.

"I was seeing Mrs. McArthur the other day and she fairly depressed me. known her so long and she's been such a good friend, and now she seems to have turned against me. I could see she thought I'd be a figure of fun at Rutherfurd, and she was quite bitter about your father, said he was a climber . . . I think myself men are quicker at picking up things than women. I'm sure when your father married me he didn't know anything about pictures and old furniture and the things he cares so much about now. He was quite pleased with our little house, and worked in the garden on Saturday afternoons. I sometimes wish that we'd never got on in the world and that we still lived at Abbotsford."

Andrew knocked his pipe against the fender and put it on the edge of the mantel-

"I wouldn't worry, mother," he said in his quiet voice. "You never pretend to be anything you're not, so you'll get on splendidly. Nobody's going to laugh unkindig at you as long as you're sincere. And it doesn't matter greatly if we do amuse our neighbours. What would Punch do without jokes about the New Rich? It's better to amuse people than bore them any day. You laugh, too, mother, then the laughter won't hurt you."

"I see what you mean, Andy. But surely nobody would ever think of laughing at your

father?"

"I suppose not. But the best kind of people are those that you can laugh at in a kindly way. And no one has more friends than you, my dear."

"In Glasgow; but I doubt there'll be none of my kind near Rutherfurd. Mrs. McArthur

savs-

"Never mind Mrs. McArthur. She's a thrawn old body sometimes."

She still looked at her son with troubled

"And you're a beautiful speaker, Andy, from being at an English school though I

whiles wonder how you've kept it, for my Glasgow accent would corrupt a nation. I doubt Mrs. McArthur's right—but anyway I'll always have you. You've been my great comfort all your life."

"That's nonsense!" said Andrew, begin-

ning to smash up the fire.

His mother took the poker from him; it vexed her economical soul to see a good fire

spoiled.

"No, it's the truth. Well, well, everything has an end. Somehow, I never thought we'd leave Deneholm. I wonder who'll buy it and sit in this room? Mebbe children will play here—" She looked wistfully at her son. "I wish you'd marry, Andy. Mind, you're getting on. Thirty-two—and I never saw you so much as look at a girl."

CHAPTER VII

"Tush, man-mortal men, mortal men."

Henry IV.

IRKMEIKLE was a very little town, merely a few uneven rows of cottages, occupied chiefly by fishermen and the workers in a small rope factory, known locally as "The Roperee," half a dozen shops and a few houses of larger size built a century ago. But on the top of the green brae, crowning it hideously, stood three staring new villas.

The large square one, Ravenscraig, was

inhabited by Miss Janet Symington.

It had many large windows hung with stiff lace curtains and blinds of mathematical neatness. Inside there was a bleak, linoleum-covered hall containing a light oak hat and umbrella stand, a table with a card tray, and two chairs, a barometer hung on the wall above the table. To the right of the front door was the drawing-room, a large, light, ugly room; to the left was the dining-room, another very light room with two bow windows, a Turkey carpet and crimson leather furniture. A black marble clock stood on the black marble mantelpiece, and on the wall hung large sea-scapes framed heavily in gilt.

The late Mr. Symington had been a wealthy manufacturer and a very godly man. He was a keen business man, but outside his business his interest centred in religious work. He gave liberally to every good cause, he was not only a just but a generous master, and the worst that could be said of him was that he was a dull man. That he most emphatically was, quiet, dour, decent, dull. He never opened a book un-

less it was the life of a missionary or a philanthropist; he could not read fiction because it was not true, therefore a waste of time. He had thought highly of his minister, Mr. Lambert, until one day he found that decent man reading Shakespeare's Sonnets; after that he regarded him with suspicion. To Mr. Symington life was real, life was earnest, and not to be frittered away reading Shakespeare.

His wife had been a delicate, peevish woman who seldom went out, but who enjoyed amassing quantities of wearing apparel, more specially expensive shoes and gloves, which she never wore. She was proud of the fact that all her life she had never needed to soil her hands with housework, and liked to hold them out to visitors saying, "Such useless hands!" and receive compliments on their shape and whiteness.

She never read anything but the newspapers, and was not much interested even in her children.

She died a few months before her husband, not much lamented and but little missed.

Janet was like her father. She had the same rather square figure and large head, the same steady brown eyes and obstinate chin. Mr. Symington had always looked like a lay preacher in his black coat and square felt hat; his daughter dressed so severely as to suggest a uniform, in a navy blue coat and skirt, a plain hat of the sailor persuasion, and a dark silk blouse made

high at the neck.

There had been a brother younger than Janet, but he had never been anything but a worry and disappointment. Even as a child David had resented the many rules that compassed the Symington household, while Janet had been the reproving elder sister, pursing her lips primly, promising that she would "tell" and that David would "catch it." At school his reports were never satisfactory, at college he idled, and when he entered his father's business he did his work listlessly and without interest. When war broke out he seemed to wake to life and went "most jocund, apt, and willingly." That hurt his father more than anything. That war should be possible at this time of day nearly broke his heart, and to see David keen and enthusiastic, light-hearted and merry as he had never been at home, to hear him say that those were the happiest years of his life simply appalled him. When it was all over David came home with a D.S.O. and the Croix de Guerre, and a

young girl with bobbed flaxen hair, neat legs and an impudent smile, whom he had met in France and married in London when they were both on leave. For one hectic month they all abode together in Ravenscraig, a month of strained conversation, of long silences, of bitter boredom on the part of the young couple and patient endeavours on the part of the elder Symingtons. David announced that he could not stand life in the old country, and meant to try to make a living in Canada. His father, deeply disappointed but also secretly relieved, gave him a sum of money, and the couple set off light-heartedly to make their tortune. Three years later John Symington died, leaving to his daughter complete control of all he possessed, but this last act of his father's did not worry David, for before lanet's letter reached the ranch David also was dead, killed by a fall from his horse, His widow, liking the life, decided to stay in Canada, and six months later married one of David's friends, and sent David's son home to Kirkmeikle to live with his Aunt

The next villa, Knebworth, was of a different type of architecture. It was of roughcast and black timber, with many small oddshaped windows, picturesque grates with imitation Dutch tiles, and antique door handles. Mrs. Heggie lived here comfortably and, on the whole, amicably with her daughter Joan. Mrs. Heggie was not only "given to hospitality," she simply delighted to feed all her friends and acquaintances. It seemed impossible for her to meet people without straightway asking them to a meal. It was probably this passionate hospitality that had soured her daughter and made that young woman's manner, in contrast, short and abrupt.

The third villa, Lucknow, was occupied by a retired Anglo-Indian and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Buckler. They had two children to educate and had come to Kirkmeikle because it was quiet and cheap. Mrs. Buckler wrestled with servants while her husband played golf and walked about with dogs.

There was a fourth house on the brae, much smaller than the others, more a cottage than a villa, which belonged to a Miss Jamieson, a genteel lady so poorly previded with this world's goods that she was obliged to take a lodger.

She had been fortunate, she would have told you, to secure at the end of the summer season a single gentleman, quiet in his habits and most considerate. He had come to Kirkmeikle because he wanted quietness to write a book, something about exploring, Miss Jamieson thought. He had been with her for three weeks and expected to remain till early spring. His name was Simon Beckett. No one, so far, had made the acquaintance of Miss Jamieson's lodger except Miss Symington's six-year-old nephew, Alastair.

That young person had a way of escaping from his nurse and pushing his small form through a gap in the hedge that divided Miss Jamieson's drying green from the road and, on reaching the window of Mr. Beckett's room, flattening his nose against the glass to see if that gentleman was at work at his desk. If he were Alastair at once joined him, and, with no shadow of doubt as to his welcome, related to him all the events that made up his day, finishing up with an invitation to join Annie and himself in Ravensctaig at nursery tea.

One afternoon in October, a day of high wind and white-capped waves and scudding clouds, Alastair was returning with Annie from the shore where he had been playing among the boats. He was toiling up the hill, shuffling his feet among the rustling brown leaves and talking to himself under his breath, when Annie called to him to wait a minute, and forthwith dived into the baker's shop. It was a chance not to be missed. Off ran Alastair straight to Miss Jamieson's, walked boldly in at the front door and found his friend at his desk.

"Hello," said Mr. Beckett, "it's you!"
"Yes," Alastair said, panting slightly from
his run. "Annie's in the baker's. I've run
away."

"Shouldn't do that, you know."

"Why not?" said Alastair. "I wanted to see you. She'll be here in a minute." He looked out of the window and saw Annie already on his track. She was standing at the gate trying to see into the room. Simon Beckett looked up from his writing and saw her, too.

"You'd better go, old man."

"I'd rather stay with you. Miss Jamieson's making pancakes for your tea, and we only have bread and butter and digestive histories."

"I'm too busy for tea to-day. Come tomorrow at four o'clock." He began again to write, and Alastair saw that there was no real hope of tea and a story or a game. Still he lingered, and presently asked, "D'you mind coming out and telling Annie you've invited me to tea to-morrow?"

The face that he turned up to his friend was the funniest little wedge of a face, with a wide mouth and a pointed chin, and pale blue eyes, the whole topped by a thatch of thick sandy hair, a Puck-like countenance.

Simon Beckett smiled as he looked at it, "Come on, then," he said, getting up and propelling Alastair before him, "we'll make

it all right with Annie.'

That damsel was not difficult to propitiate. When Alastair had tea in "the room" she had tea in the kitchen, and Miss Jamieson was known for her comfortable ways and her good cooking, so she blushed and said she would ask Miss Symington, and thanked Mr. Beckett in the name of her charge, calling him "Sir" quite naturally, a thing she had never thought to do, for she belonged to the Labour Party and believed in equality. As they were parting, all three on excellent terms, at the gate Mrs. Heggie and her daughter passed. Joan would have walked on, but her mother stopped.

"Well, Alastair," she said, in the loud, bantering tone which she kept for children, "what mischief have you been up to now,

I wonder?"

Alastair regarded her in hostile silence, while Annie poked him in the back to make some response.

Mrs. Heggie turned to Miss Jamieson's

lodger.

"You're Mr. Beckett, I think? How d'you do? Strange that we should never have met, but you're a great student, I hear. It must take a lot of hard thinking to write a book. I often say that to Joanmy daughter, Mr. Beckett-for she's inclined to be literary too. We would be so glad to see you any time. Could you lunch with us to-morrow?"

Joan trod heavily on the foot nearest her, and her mother winced but went recklessly "No? Then Thursday. Thursday would suit just as well. One-thirty. Then that's settled."

"Thank you," said Simon Beckett, in chastened tones. "It's tremendously kind of

you. Yes, Thursday. Good-bye."
"I wonder," said Miss Joan Heggie coldly, as they walked on, "what possible pleasure it gives you, mother, to try to entertain people who quite obviously don't want to be entertained. You absolutely forced that poor man to come to lunch."

"Oh, I don't know," said Mrs. Heggie,

"I think he's only shy."

"Not he, he's unwilling, and I don't blame him. Kirkmeikle society is far from enlivening. Oh, here comes Miss Symington. Don't stop, mother, for goodness' sake,"

But Mrs. Heggie was physically incapable of passing without a few words to a friend or neighbour; besides, she was wearing her new winter things, and was going to take tea with the doctor's sister, and altogether felt very pleased and happy. She shook hands with Miss Symington, hoped she saw her well, and told her where she was going to tea. She rather hoped in return to receive a compliment about her becoming new hat and coat, but none seemed forthcoming, so she said, "Well, good-bye, just now, and do come and see us when you have time. Could you lunch with us on Thursday? Do. One-thirty," Joan gaped despairingly at the sky. "That'll be nice. Mr. Beckett is coming. Good-bye. Oh, by the way, did you hear a rumour that the Harbour House is let? Our cook heard it from the postman. Let's hope it's a nice family who'll be a help in the place. Well, good-bye just now-

"Mother, what do you mean by it?" Joan

asked as they walked away.

"I don't know," said Mrs. Heggie. "It just came out,"

But there was no real repentance in her

CHAPTER VIII

"Lady Alice, Lady Louise, Between the wash of the tumbling seas."
WILLIAM MORRIS.

TEAN DOUGLAS insisted on taking Lady Jane to Kingshouse out of the way of the removal, and Nicole and Barbara, accompanied by two maids from Rutherfurd, an under-housemaid and a girl who had been "learning the table," set out for Kirkmeikle to make the Harbour House habit-

It proved a comparatively easy task. Mrs. Agnes Martin had managed to chase out the painters in good time and had every cupboard and floor scrubbed white when they arrived, the furniture fitted in as if made for the rooms, and very soon the house took on a look of comfort.

Now, after a week, Nicole, all impatience, was planning for her mother's coming.

"You'll go to Edinburgh and meet her, won't you, Babs? And I'll be standing on the doorstep to welcome you both. Let's stage-manage it properly, for there's a tremendous lot in one's first impression of a new place. You'd better lunch in Edinburgh and come by the afternoon train—that's much the nicest time to arrive, about four-thirty or five o'clock.

Nicole moved restlessly about the roomthey were sitting in the drawing-roomaltering things here and there, while Bar-

bara sewed placidly.

"We'd better arrange for a car to be waiting at Thornton, don't you think? The first look of Kirkmeikle from the station is frankly ugly, and to jolt down here in a mouldy cab would be very depressing. If you motor you will come through cleaned harvest fields, and beside the links, with glimpses of the sea, and then there would be the harbour and the open door, and inside familiar things everywhere for her eyes to rest on. . . If only it would be the sort of day I want—a touch of frost and the sky sunset-red, the stars beginning to appear and . . ."

"Don't expect it," said Barbara. "Rain and an east haar smothering everything—that's what's most likely to happen."

Nicole laughed, "In that case the house will look all the brighter. I'm pleased with it, aren't you? Everything has worked out so amazingly well. Mrs. Martin, for instance. I admit I was rash, but you must own that she looks like being a woman in a thousand, and is certainly a cook in five thousand."

Barbara shook her head. "You do exaggerate so wildly. But I must say she's a good cook, and in these days a cook that will do without a kitchen-maid is something to be thankful for, and I think she'll be good with the other servants. She seems to take an interest in them and tries to make things easy for them."

"I know. She said to me: 'Christina's a rale thorough worker, and Beenie too, they're baith wise lassies.' It's funny, isn't it, that sharp, upward tilt in the Fife tongue after the slow, soft Border? We'll get used to it in time as well as to many other things. The thing that matters is that mother should feel herself at home."

Three days later, when the hired car drew up at the door, the scene was almost exactly as Nicole had pictured it. The tide was out, and beyond the low wall a stretch of firm, ribbed sand lay white in the half-light, a very new moon hung bashfully in a clear sky, the masts of a sailing-boat stood up black beyond the harbour, somewhere near a boy was whistling a blithe air. The open door showed a hall glowing with chrysanthemums and red berries; sporting prints that

had been in the gun-room at Rutherfurd hung on the walls; the clock, the chairs, the half circular table, the rugs on the floor, were all old friends.

When Lady Jane entered the drawing-

room she cried out with pleasure.

The curtains had not been drawn, for Nicole liked the contrast between the chill world of sea and gathering dark outside and the comfort within, and from the four long windows in a row could be seen the sea crawling up the sand under the baby moon. Inside a fire of coal and logs blazed, and amber-shaded lights fell on the old comfortable chairs, the cabinet of china, the row of pictured children's faces over the mantelshelf. The tea-table stood before the sofa, with the familiar green-dragon china on the Queen Anne tray; Lady Jane's own writing-table was placed where the light from the window fell on it, with all her own special treasures arranged on it-the big leather blotter with her initials on it in silver which had been the combined gift of her children the last birthday they had all been together, the double frame with Ronnie and Archie, a miniature of Nicole as a fat child of three.

Barbara put an arm round her aunt and led her to her own chair.

"Well now, dear, we've got our journeying over in the meantime. And here is Christina with the tea, and we want it badly after our exiguous lunch. The club was so crowded, Nik, and the food so bad! Everything finished except stewed steak with macaroni, and tapioca pudding to follow."

Nicole had been standing by one of the windows watching her mother's face. Now

she came forward to the fire.

"You must have been very late, you foolish creatures. Pour out the tea, Babs, and I'll hand round the hot scones. See, Mummy, everything baked by Mrs. Martin! Yes, even that frightfully smart-looking iced cake. She is a treasure, I assure you, procured by me single-handed, because Babs was sceptical and cautious."

Lady Jane smiled at her daughter and

took a bit of scone.

"Darlings," she said, "what a pretty room! I think our things look nicer than they ever did before. . . . Those four windows with the seats looking to the sea—I almost seem to have seen the room before, I feel so at home in it."

"Then," said her daughter, "we shan't need to butter your paws. Isn't that what you do to make a cat feel at home?"

"Meaning me a cat! Trust Nicole to think of some absurd thing. No; there's no need for such extreme measures. I am more than happy to have my own dear things about me in this funny little sealooking place, and my two girls to talk to. . . I have all sorts of messages from everyone. Jean's kindness was endless—"

"Tell us," said Barbara.

After dinner in the eighteenth-century dining-room, with the striped silk curtains drawn—an excellent dinner, for Mrs. Martin was anxiously determined to justify the faith Nicole had placed in her—they sat round the drawing-room fire. Lady Jane got out a strip of lace that she was making. Barbara knitted a child's jacket; and Nicole sat in a low chair with a book in her lap, a large book with dull brown covers.

Her mother looked curiously at it. "What have you got there, child? It looks

ponderous."

Nicole held it up for her mother's inspection. "I found it among father's books and it's going to be a perfect godsend to me. I hear the sound of Tweed while I read. It's Sir Walter Scott's 'Journal.' Every night I shall read a bit; it ought to last me quite a while, for there are two stout volumes, and afterwards I'm going to read Lockhart's 'Life.' I've got that too, in the closest print I ever saw, one fat calf-bound volume presented to father as a prize in 1878, more than forty years ago."

"But, Nicole," Barbara began, "you never could read Scott's novels. I remember Uncle Walter offering you a prize if you'd read through 'The Antiquary,' and

you stuck.'

"I did. To my shame be it said. But that was only a tale; this is true, and so human. I shall read bits out to you. It's the sort of book that simply asks to be read aloud."

Barbara passed her cousin a skein of wool. "Hold that for me, will you, while I wind? . . . Most of our time I suppose will be spent in this way, working a little, reading a little, talking, writing

letters . . ."

"Yes," said Nicole. "I hope so. I do love a routine, doing the same thing at the same time every day. We shan't ever have to go out in the evenings now, so we'll have ample time to read and meditate. . . . I mean to read all Trollope. I've never had time before to settle to him. . . . Isn't it odd to sit here in this little house—we three, and not know anything what-

ever about the people who live round us? We, who have always known everyone for miles round."

"Dear," said her mother, "Aunt Constance wants to know if you would like her to write to friends of hers—Erskine, I think is the name, who live not very far from Kirkmeikle?"

Nicole bounded in her seat at the sug-

gestion.

"Oh, mother, beg her not to. Think what a disaster! Those Erskines would feel they had to come motoring over and invite us, and we would meet their friends, and before we knew where we were we would be in a vortex and all our beautiful peace smashed."

"Nonsense!" Barbara said, impatiently tweaking the wool. "Do hold it straight or how can I wind? Of course we want to know the Erskines. It will make all the

difference,"

"It's so like Aunt Constance to have friends in every out-of-the-way nook and cranny!" Nicole grumbled. "I thought we'd be safe here."

Barbara finished winding her ball and

said severely:

"You know quite well that there is no one here we could possibly be friends with."

"Isn't there, haughty aristocrat? Well, I can't keep myself to myself. I want to know everybody there is to know, butcher and baker and candlestick-maker. Yes, even the people who live in the red villas. The Erskines would be exactly like all the people we have always known. Now that we are different I want to know different sort of people."

"How are we different?" Barbara asked

sharnly

"We've come down in the world," her cousin told her solemnly.

"Ridiculous! Aunt Jane, isn't she horrid? Surely you don't want her to make friends with all and sundry?"

Lady Jane laughed. "I certainly think with you that we should get to know the Erskines, but it's pleasant to live on good terms with all our neighbours."

"Of course it is," Barbara agreed, "if we stop there; but Nicole never knows where to draw the line. She gets so disgustingly familiar with everyone—I sometimes think

she's a born Radical."

"What a thing to say about the vicepresident of the Tweeddale Conservative Association! Well, you make friends with these Erskines, Bab, and I'll confine my attentions to Kirkmeikle. I know I was born expansive. I can't help it, and really it makes life much better fun. And, Mums, you will sit here and watch the game and entertain first Bab's friends, then mine. It will be as entertaining as a circus-'

"I wonder," said Lady Jane.

wonder ! "

CHAPTER IX

"Young fresh folkes, he and she." CHAUCER.

DARBARA had once said of Nicole, and said it rather bitterly, that she might start on a journey to London, alone in a first-class carriage, but before her destination was reached she would have made the acquaintance of half the people in the train. An exaggerated statement but

with a grain of truth in it.

There was something about Nicole that made people offer her their confidences. Perhaps they saw sympathy and understanding in her eyes; perhaps they recognized in her what Mr. Chesterton calls "that thirst for things as humble, as human, as laughable, as that daily bread for which we

cry to God."

Certainly she found entertainment in whatever she heard or saw, and never came in, even from a walk on the moors round Rutherfurd, without something to relate. An excellent mimic, she made people live when she repeated their sayings, and "Nikky's turns" had been very popular with her father and brothers. Nowadays her recitals were not quite so gay: her mother and Barbara laughed to be sure, but there was something wanting. However, as Nicole often told herself, the world was still not without its merits.

It was not likely that in such a small community as Kirkmeikle the Rutherfurds would be neglected; and indeed, everyone had called at once; the minister and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Lambert, the doctor and his sister-Kilgour was their name, Mrs. Heggie dragging her unwilling daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Buckler, and Miss Symington. But they all called very correctly between three and four and found no one in, for the new inmates of the Harbour House took long walks every afternoon to explore the neighbourhood.

Barbara took up the cards that were lying one day to read aloud the names:

"Mrs. Heggie, Knebworth. "Miss Symington, Ravenscraig. "Mr. and Mrs. Buckler, Lucknow."

Then, flicking the cards aside, she said: "How ghastly they sound! We'd better not return the calls for ages; we don't want to land ourselves in a morass of invitations."

"A morass of invitations!" Nicole repeated. "'Morass' is good. Each step taken, that is each invitation accepted, leading you on until you get stuck deeper and deeper in the society of Kirkmeikle. . . . But what makes you think they would want to entertain us so extensively? It would only be tea-and that's soon over."

"Luncheon," said Barbara gloomily-

"perhaps dinner."

"Well, even if they did! There are so few of them we'd soon get through with it." "Yes; but we'd have to ask them back."

"Why not?" Nicole asked. "Mrs. Martin would give them a very good dinner, and mother would entertain them with her so justly famous charm of manner; and you and I are not without a certain I can't think what word I pleasing-want."

Barbara shrugged her shoulders. "Personally I have no desire to impress the natives. The names of their houses are enough for me. . . . Aunt Jane, have you fixed on the pattern of chintz you want? I'd better write before the post goes."

The next day came a breath of winter. The quiet dry weather that had prevailed for some time vanished, hail spattered like shot against the long windows; a wild wind tore down the narrow street and whistled in the chimneys, while white horses raced up the beach and threw spray high over the wall.

After luncheon Nicole came into the drawing-room with a waterproof hat pulled well down over her face and a Burberry buttoned up round her throat, and announced that she was going out.

"My dear, on such a day!" her mother

expostulated.

"I'm 'dressed for drowning,'" Nicole assured her. "I only want to clamber about a bit and watch the waves; they'll be gorgeous along at the Red Rocks . . . Won't you come, Babs?"

But Barbara, looking at the tumult of water through the streaming panes, shook her head. "It's a day for the fireside, and some quite good books have come from the Times, and I've work to finish. Do you mind?"

"Not a bit. I rather like to walk by my wild lone. . . . No, Mums, I will not

take Harris-she's particularly busy to-day tidying clothes. No, nor Christina, nor Beenie-not even Mrs. Martin. They would tell us with truth that they had been engaged as domestic servants, not as props in a storm. I assure you I'll come to no Don't worry. I'll be home for harm. tea."

In spite of her daughter's reassuring words Lady Jane spent most of the afternoon looking out of the window. Nor was Barbara at all comfortable with her new novel and her work, and when the early darkness began to fall and her aunt asked if she thought anything could have happened to Nicole, she became distinctly cross and said that it was extremely selfish of people to make other people uneasy with their whims and fancies. "So like Nicole," she added, "to want to go out and watch waves. I'm sure we can see more than we want of them from these windows. I don't know why we ever came to live by the sea. . . . But I suppose I'd better go and look for her-restless creature that she is."

But even as she got up to go the door opened and the wanderer appeared, her wet hair whipped against her face, her eyes bright with battling against the wind.

"Nicole," cried Barbara, relief in her voice, "you look like the east wind incarnate! The very sight of you makes me feel cold and blown about."

"Such fun!" Nicole gasped. "Yes, rather wet, Mums, and more than a little battered. Give me ten minutes to change. Here's Christina with the tea--"

They demanded to know, when she came down dry and tidy, where she had spent two and a half hours on such a day.

"We got so anxious about you that Babs was just starting to look for you when you came in," her mother told her. "And we had no idea where you were gone."

Nicole patted her mother's hand and Barbara's knee to show her penitence and took a bite of buttered toast.

"It was wretched of me to worry you, but, you see, I've been making the acquaintance of some of our neighbours,"

"On such a day!" cried Lady Jane.

Nicole laughed aloud. "You may say it, Mums! On such a day! . . . Give me my tea over here, will you, Babs? Having sat myself down by this gorgeous fire I must stay hugging it. Thanks. Now this is cosy and I'll tell you all about it. First, you must know, I went to the harbour, which was quite deserted except for a boy loung-

ing against the wall as if it were a summer day. A wave came over the top and nearly washed me away into the water: I had to hold on to a chain."

"Then," said her mother, "you must have been drenched from the very beginning. Oh, my dear, that was reckless of

"No, no; salt water never gave anyone cold. I gasped and spluttered for a bit to the evident amusement of the boy and said, 'Oh, what a storm!' He grinned again and spat into the water. 'Storrum?' said. 'It's no a storrum, it's juist a wee jobble.' Wasn't he a horrid fellow? . . . I left the harbour then and walked along the shore to the Red Rocks. It took me about half an hour, for the wind seemed to clutch at me and pull me back; indeed, when I reached the rocks I got down on my hands and knees and crawled. I thought it would be rather silly to risk breaking a leg. The waves were fine: to watch them rush in and hurl themselves against the rocks so exhilarated me that I found myself shouting and encouraging them. It's a good thing you weren't there, Babs; you would have been ashamed. I was just thinking of coming home when I suddenly heard quite near me a scream which almost immediately turned into a laugh; and turning round, I found a small boy clutching his hair while his hat soared sea-wards."

"A small boy alone on the rocks!" Lady Jane asked.

"Not alone, Mums. There was a young man with him.

"A young man," said Barbara.

Nicole's eyes danced. "An extraordinarily good-looking young man with a delightful voice and, as far as I could judge among jagged rocks and gathering darkness and a wind blowing at a thousand miles an hour, some charm of manner. Aha!"

Barbara made a sceptical sound and asked what such a being was doing in Kirk-

meikle.

"Ah, that I can't tell you," Nicole confessed. "He didn't confide in me. The small boy is called Alastair Symington and lives with his aunt at Ravenscraig. When we call on that lady we may hear more."

"It's a matter of no interest to me," Barbara declared.

"I threw out feelers," continued Nicole, "to find out what he was doing here. I told him what we were doing here, but he offered no confidences in return. I think



"I found a small boy clutching his hair while his hat soared sea-wards."

Drawn by John Cameron

he must be in rooms near Ravenscraig, for the small boy kept hinting that he would like to go to tea with him. . . . You'll like him, Mums, the small Alastair I mean. He told me a long tale about the minister, Mr. Lambert, finding a gold comb on the sands, which he took home with him, and that night, as he sat in his study, somebody tapped at his window and it was a mermaid to ask for her comb! According to Alastair the minister went with her to the Red Rocks and had dinner with her-cod liver oil soup, which it seems is excellent and a great delicacy-and she asked him what she could do to show her gratitude. There had been a great storm a little while before that, and many boats had gone down and women had lost their bread-winners, and the mermaid gave the minister gold and jewels from the bottom of the sea to sell for the poor people."

Barbara looked indignant. "What a very odd sort of minister to tell a child such

ridiculous tales!"

Nicole helped herself to some strawberry jam and laughed as she said, "A very nice sort of minister, I think. Alastair was stumbling along in the storm looking for another comb. He said he thought it was the sort of day a comb would be likely to get lost, and he's very anxious to see a mermaid in a cave. Mums, we must call at once on Miss Symington if only to get better acquainted with this Alastair child. How old? About six, I think. A queer little fellow and most pathetically devoted to this tall young man. To a boy brought up by women a man is a wonder and delight. The two escorted me to the door. I asked them to tea and Alastair was obviously more than willing, but the man said they were too wet, as indeed they were.'

"Did you discover the man's name?" "I did, from Alastair. He is called

Simon Beckett."

Lady Jane wrinkled her brows. "Isn't there something familiar about that name-Simon Beckett?"

"Aren't you thinking about Thomas à Becket?" Nicole suggested.

"No, no. I am sure I read somewhere lately of a Simon Beckett having done something."

"Crime?" said Nicole. "He didn't look like a criminal exactly. Isn't there a

Beckett who boxes?"

"I know," cried Barbara. "I know where you saw the name, Aunt Jane. It was in the account of the last attempt on Everest, more than a year ago. You remember? Two men almost reached the top and one succumbed. Simon Beckett was the one that came back. You remember we read about his lecture to the Geographical. Uncle Walter was tremendously interested."

"Why, of course. . . . But this can't be the same man, Nicole?"

"Of course not," Barbara broke in. "What would that Simon Beckett be doing m Kirkmeikle?"

"This Simon Beckett certainly didn't mention Everest to me," Nicole said as she began on a slice of plum cake with every appearance of enjoyment.

(To be continued)



Let Us Go Back

Grace Noll Crowell

By

We are tired and weary and worn and sad, Let us go hand in hand Back to a glistening, holy town, In an ancient, holy land.

Under the high white winter stars, The old path still is bright; So many have wandered and missed the way Let us go back to-night.

Told us to lead us far. They have said, "There is no holy child, Under a high, white star.

Let us go back-they were but wild tales

They have laughed at faith that was strong and clean, God help us that faith grew dim. O, let us go back the old lost road-Let us go back to Him.

Our Bachelor Christmas LIBERTY HALL D'HParry

ALTHOUGH Billy Vane yows 'twas my idea in the beginning, I would much rather dear old Uncle Barnaby had the credit of it all, for, though he had been dead five years before it came about, yet without him it could never have been, as

you will see for yourselves.

"Oh, I'll book you a seat with all the pleasure in the world, sir, though, mark you, we guarantee nothing," smiled the clerk at the coach office. "The snow's bad enough here, but it's worse in the Midlands; there's ten foot of it beyond Grantham—the York stage in this morning took three days on the journey, the Manchester mails haven't arrived at all: never knew such weather—and there's more to come, so they say. If your honour will listen to my advice you'll stay where you are."

I knew he was right, so I abandoned my purpose, thanked the man for his honesty, and adjusting my muffler, left the warm room for the bitter cold of the street, not in the best of moods by any means, only to run into the arms of Jack Jesmond and Billy Vane, bound upon the same errand, before I had gone twenty yards. What a shout we

gave!

"How, Jack, old fellow, has the conquering hero returned at last?" I cried, as we gripped hands; for our old schoolmate had been gaining laurels in the Peninsula while I was waiting for my first brief, and Billy Vane duly qualifying for a doctor.

"Egad, yes, and well I know it, Frank," he replied with a wry smile. "This is a poor exchange for sunny Spain, but how I am going to get to Donegal, and tomorrow Christmas Eve, hanged if I know!"

"It can't be done," said I definitely, with a jerk of my head in the direction of the coach office, as I retailed what the clerk had told me. "What are your plans, Billy?"

"After what you say I have none. Carlisle's clearly out of the question when it's taken Jack here a day and a half to get up from Plymouth; and no one has had the decency to invite me for Christmas!"

"Then the three of us are in the self-same boat!" I cried. "So come along to my chambers; 'tis only a stone's throw, and I have a solution to propound which can best be done by a blazing fire round a bowl of punch—two things very suitable to this gay and festive season."

It was only when we reached my quarters, looking out on to the gardens of Gray's Inn, where Francis Bacon once walked under those very trees, so gaunt and bare now against the leaden sky, that I saw Jack Jesmond was carrying his left wrist in a

sling.

"What, wounded, Jack?" I exclaimed.

"Nay, 'tis little enough, and yet sufficient to end my campaigning for the next six months," he smiled, as Billy helped him carefully off with his cloak and revealed the stained red regimentals with their captain's epaulette on one shoulder. "Egad, Frank, but you're snug here. Give me a touch of English firelight on a panelled wall before all your grand Spanish palaces and flea-bitten posadas."

We got it out of him later on, and it was a stirring story enough, of the scaling ladders at Badajoz, where Jack had led one of the forlorn hopes; but in the meantime they were keen to hear the thing that was in my mind, and I by no means loth to unfold it. The punch, too, put us into merry mood.

"Billy knows all about my legacy," said I, "but you had just sailed for Portugal when Uncle Barnaby died and left me his

house and fortune."

"Davenant was ever a lucky dog," grunted Billy Vane with a twinkle in his eyes.

"Don't make too sure of that," said I. "I can see myself dying a lonely old bachelor yet. Money and a mansion do not constitute happiness, and there are some things that

even all your skill cannot cure, Doctor William Vane, M.D."

"Let me, at least, diagnose the complaint,

Frank! " laughed Billy.

"Ecod, yes! Hearken to the confirmed bachelor of twenty-five!" and Jack Jesmond led the laugh against me.

They were both handsome fellows, while my own face was plain enough in all conscience, and that was my secret trouble.

"You may scoff," said I, "but don't forget that I am the last of my line. It was dear old Uncle Barnaby's wish that I should marry and hand on the name, a proceeding to which I am in nowise averse, I can assure you, but no pretty girl has ever looked at me a second time, and there you have it."

Another roar of laughter was all the sympathy I received, and I had to join in, although there was truth in what I had

said.

"But a truce to this," I continued. "Let me get to my point. Liberty Hall, as they call it, I have put up for sale, and at present it is in the possession of my uncle's old coachman and his wife, who are caretakers there. What do you say to we three journeying down and spending a bachelor Christmas? 'Tis a nice old place, which before another year might have passed out of my hands; the sideboard is a generous one, the memory of my kind old relative the only ghost that is like to walk through the house, and Mrs. Blanchflower will see to it that the beds are well aired. If you will only be content with the absence of beauty's eyes for once in a while, you gay dogs, it seems we might do worse!"

"I swear we could scarce do better!"

cried Jack Jesmond.

"To which sentiment I very heartily subscribe!" laughed Billy, raising his glass. "Here's to Christmas at Liberty Hall and long life to the founder of the feast!"

"Then that's settled," said I, reaching for a sheet of paper and a quill. "And now for a list of things to be laid in, for we must not spring a mine on those honest old folk unawares. Item—a plump turkey, eh?—and what's the matter with a leg of pork for a start?"

It was a long list by the time we got to the end of it, and I sent my man amarketing, knowing that he would do it far better than I. We ruled out a barrel of oysters from the difficulty of conveying it, since the journey must be made on horseback on account of the weather, and all we took with us carried on the saddle; but at length

we were finished—and the punch bowl also; and it was good to have met again and to feel like three schoolboys once more looking forward to the Christmas holidays.

"Don't forget your fiddle, Billy—it's one of the conditions of the invitation!" I cried, as I saw them out on to the landing.

"Egad! and Jack here shall bring his Spanish guitar, and if we don't succeed in making night hideous between us, it won't be for the want of trying!" laughed the merry fellow from the staircase.

I

At nine o'clock the following morning we mounted the stout nags I had ordered to be in waiting at that hour; not without some good-humoured banter from the other occupants of the Inn and the little crowd of loafers out of the neighbouring mews.

It had taken some time to secure our packages about us and to sling the turkey from my holsters, so that, what with our valises, the musical instruments in their strange wrappings, and ourselves, cloaked to the tips of our cars, we seemed bent on a much more formidable expedition than a ride of less than twenty miles.

But long before we came to the foot of Highgate Hill we were glad our start had

been an early one.

The snow so far was a good foot in depth, and the keeper of the turnpike told us 'twas deeper still on the other side, which proved to be true, for there it reached to the hocks of our horses as we plodded down the slope that led towards Finchley.

I shall not readily forget the waste of white that met our eyes before we made the descent, when we paused to breathe our nags on the hilltop. All the hedges had been blotted out, and nothing but a row of elms, or a church tower here and there, marked the landscape, even these half-hidden by the feathery mantle.

"Tis a mercy there is no frost with it, else we should never get on at all," said Jack, out of the cloud of steam that en-

veloped him.

"And we're not there yet by any manner of means!" grunted Billy. "Look at this!"

The Manchester High-flyer was struggling up the hill, six farm horses harnessed to the usual team, the wheels axle deep, and the passengers trudging beside it, holding up the skirts of their box coats. Every while we encountered some vehicle stuck fast; sometimes a chaise, at others a stage

OUR BACHELOR CHRISTMAS AT LIBERTY HALL

toach, and once a huge wagon lying on its side like a wrecked ship on a lee shore.

"This reminds me of our march to

Corunna - only that I made the last ten leagues on foot with one shoe fit for duty and the other minus the heel!" laughed Jesmond, as we crawled over the common at Finchley, meeting the keen north wind; and when we reached the Red Lion on Barnet Hill, we were all glad to call for hot rummers and make a

They tried their best to frighten us about the road there. but only succeeded as far as luncheon was concerned, and we fortified ourselves with the roast beef of Old England until we were proof against every-

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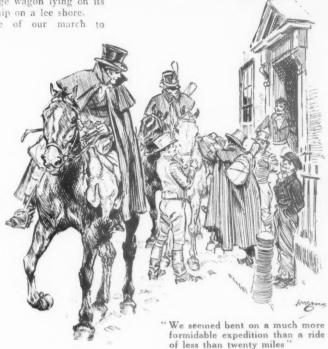
thing-even the tales of the belated travellers with which the house was filled, some of whom had been days on their journey to London already.

The drifts were certainly deeper than anything I had even seen, and a dozen times we were brought to a stand on the old coach road that loops like a serpent, although we had taken fresh horses at the posting house.

At Mymms, too, it began to snow pretty briskly, but we struggled on, lucky that we did not miss the cross-road that led past the hall, which stood a mile back from the main thoroughfare, for the light was falling by that time, and the last mile we were floundering girth deep.

"There's one thing on which we may certainly count," said I, as I pulled my smoking-jade up at the wrought-iron gates. "No one will disturb us here. We must give the lie to that ancient adage about two being company and three being none-so welcome to Liberty Hall, my bucks, if only I can get the gate open!"

It was not a large man-ion, but it had an honest homelike look on its red brick face



in spite of the closed shutters, making one feel instinctively that its Early Georgian squareness contained panelled rooms, and family portraits, and that it only wanted fires lit in the grates to warm it into life,

"Lord save us, William!" cried Mrs. Blanchflower, lifting a pair of helpless hands to her white mob cap with its blue ribbon. "If here beant Master Francis and two gentlemen come for Christmas, and nothing in the house to eat, nor yet a bed fit to sleep in! Oh, sir, why did you not send me word?"

"Because we did not know ourselves, you dear, good soul!" I laughed. "So we've brought the word with us and food enough for an alderman, and we'll help you lay the fires and stir the pudding, and be grateful for the smallest mercies you can shower on three unfortunate bachelors who have nowhere else to go!"

We dismounted like three snowmen as her husband struggled into his livery coat and came out under the portico to help us unload our bundles, and in five minutes the old dame was all smiles again, while her spouse, who had been Uncle Barnaby's

soldier servant, was saluting Captain Jack at every second word, and showing that he had not forgotten how to handle horses.

I had chosen the small oak room on the ground floor for that night as the one that might be warmed the quickest, and with a fire roaring up the chimney, the candles alight, and the famous Barnaby port glowing like rubies in our glasses, we settled down to listen to Jack Jesmond's campaigning stories after a glorious feed, our faces still showing the effects of the ride, and our long pipes in full blast.

"Egad, Frank!" said the soldier, after a description of the march from Astorga that made us shiver, "what do you want to part with this house for? Peace, warmth and contentment-with the best of wine and the best of friends! Could any man wish

for more?"

"Tis too large for me-without a wife," I added, and I suppose they caught the sigh

I drew, for the rogues laughed.

"There are some folk who never know when they are well off," said Billy. "Cut the law, Frank, leave those gloomy chambers of thine, and turn country squire. Women were only sent to plague us. Look at we three to-night-not a care-no aching pangs of jealousy, nothing to disturb the blissful serenity of existence! Pass the bottle, you fortunate dog!"

I stretched an arm towards it, but held up a warning hand instead, saying

"Hush!"

There was a knocking upon the front door, and we all heard it in the silence of the house.

"Too late for visitors," said Billy. "Most likely a branch of the big cedar tapping against the lintel in the rising wind?"

"The big cedar would scarcely use the knocker, Billy," laughed Jack Jesmond. "I say 'tis some unlucky tramp caught in the

storm," and he looked at me.

"William and Mary must be abed long ago, for 'tis turned eleven o'clock," said I, looking at the timepiece. "Let us see into this thing." And each taking a silver candlestick from the table, we went into the passage.

What with two massive bolts, a huge chain, and an enormous key, 'twas quite a business when the door had once been fastened for the night, but when at last I threw it open we all exclaimed at what the

candlelight revealed.

Two figures, muffled in scarlet cloaks and fur-trimmed hoods, stood on the doorstep, and two exceedingly pretty faces were turned imploringly up at us.

"Oh, sirs!" faltered one of the young ladies. "Forgive us for disturbing you at this hour, but we are in great distress. Our chaise has stuck fast in the lane; the postboy rode off with the horses to get help more than an hour since, and we had just made up our minds that we must stay here till morning when a lull in the storm

Jack Jesmond swore in Spanish, which sounded very impressive, and was rewarded by a flash from a pair of lovely eyes. "Zounds, but you would have starved to

showed us your house and a light in it."

death!" he cried.

"Egad, I will dust the rascal's jacket for him!" exclaimed Billy valiantly,

"Ladies, my poor house is at your disposal," said I, and we all three bowed with the candles in our hands, as we stood aside to let them enter-

To our surprise, however, they still paused, and after looking at each other, one of them said timidly, yet with the most roguish smile in the world, which, by the way, she directed at Billy: "I am afraid we are doomed to overtax your hospitality, sir, but we have left poor Aunt Deborah in the carriage!"

"Tut-tut!" ejaculated Billy Vane. "This must be seen to. Jack, you stay where you are with that wrist of yours, and show our fair visitors to the fire, while Frank and I discover the lady and rescue her!"

I was never abroad on a colder night in my life, for it was freezing by that time, and the whirling flakes stung our cheeks as we ploughed through the white drift out on to the road, but fortunately we spied the postchaise not far away, and were soon at the door, from which, with some difficulty, we extracted a female so swathed and muffled in fur tippets and wraps that we gave up all attempt to examine her features until we had carried her between us into the house.

She seemed half frozen, but the moment we set her on her feet in the oak room she thawed.

"I thank you, gentlemen; this is mighty civil of you," she said in a humorous voice, at the same time revealing a face that must have been very pretty once on a time. "Tis all my fault for travelling in such unconscionable weather; but there, I never did things like ordinary people. I am Miss Deborah Meadowes-these are my twin nieces, Margery and Joan. Will our trunks



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From the Painting by Joseph Simpson

"any Time-any Clime"

For over 40 years PLAYER'S have been producing Tobacco and Cigarettes in ever-increasing quantities to meet the public demand. Their resources are such that at all times the choicest and finest growths of matured Virginia leaf are at their command—and these alone are used. The conditions under which they are manufactured are as perfect as man can devise. The manner of their packing, again the outcome of 40 years' experience, ensures their reaching the smoker with all their freshness and purity unchanged.



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The Children's best drink to go to bed on

LET the last thing they have at night be the best in the whole day—a cup of fragrant Bournville Cocoa. For many years this delicious nightcap has brought happiness into children's slumbers, because it is comforting. Every night, to mothers just like you, a cup of Bournville Cocoa is giving healthful sleep as sweet as the children's.

BOURNVILLE

-Food below pre-war price

See the name "Cadbury" on every piece of chocolate.

OUR BACHELOR CHRISTMAS AT LIBERTY HALL

be safe out there, d'ye think? Will that villain of a postboy know where we are when he comes back?"

"He will not return to-night, Miss Meadowes," said I. "And I am afraid you must make the best of our bachelor quarters until the weather abates. As for your trunks, they shall be brought in as soon as we can uncord them. Meantime, my name is Davenant, and my friends here are Doctor Vane and Captain Jesmond."

"Of the 28th, I see," snapped the lady, who might have been fifty, and had a short, sharp way of jerking out her words which a lurking smile in one corner of her good-humoured mouth robbed of all offence. "And who's that man—that Royal Dragoon over the mantelpiece—not Barnaby Davenant, surely?"

"That is certainly a portrait of my uncle, Captain Barnaby, madam," said I, very surprised. "Did you know him?"

"Did I know him indeed? Might have married him before you were born—but alas, there was another!" And I saw her face twitch. "Poor Barnaby! He said I had broken his heart when I refused him for the fifth time—but lard, I don't believe in such things as broken hearts. Is he dead?"

"Five years ago, madam, and he never married," said I.

While she had been speaking my old housekeeper appeared in the doorway, and her surprise at our coming was nothing to the consternation in her kindly face as she saw the ladies.

"Lawks a-mercy!" she exclaimed, bobbing three curtsies and smoothing her apron with a pair of floury hands. "A good thing I stayed up to prepare for to-morrow. William, a pan of coals for the blue bedchamber and another for the west room, and two fires to be lit, and madam will no doubt wish for a dish of hot tea?"

"La!" chuckled Miss Deborah Meadowes.
"We seem to have come to Liberty Hall with a vengeance."

"That is indeed its name," said I, and we laughed.

The clocks were striking twelve before the ladies were all above stairs, and we three stood in front of Uncle Barnaby's portrait looking at one another.

portrait looking at one another.

"Gads life!" exclaimed Jack Jesmond tapturously. "Did either of you ever see such a glorious pair of eyes as Miss Margery's?"

"Yes," chuckled Billy. "Her sister Joan's are twice as fine to my thinking, and the

squeeze of her hand at the foot of the staircase fills me with hope already. Ye gods! now would I have it snow, and snow, and snow!"

Then with a sly glance at my face he added, digging Jack in the ribs: "Frank, my buck, Fortune has wafted a couple of heiresses to your hospitable portals, and I'll swear Aunt Deborah, albeit a trifle long in the tooth, has a very soft spot in her heart for the nephew of her old admirer already!"

"You are a brace of fools!" was my blunt rejoinder. "I am going to bed!"

III

WHEN I drew aside my curtains next morning I saw that Billy's wish had been more than fulfilled, for it had snowed throughout the night. The boughs of the great cedar hung low under their burden, and all trace of our passage from the gates to the hall door the previous evening were entirely blotted out. As for Miss Meadowes' chaise, the roof of it alone was visible, the snow having drifted almost level with the hedge ton.

But the fall had ceased and the sun was making the whole world bright, everything glistening like diamonds, outside and in; for when I reached the dining-room, which I did before any of my guests were down, there was the table set out with the best silver and a famous fire blazing on the wide hearth.

William must have been up betimes, too, for the red-berried holly decorated the pictures, and coming behind Mrs. Blanchflower unawares I kissed her soundly under a tempting bunch of mistletoe her husband had hung in the hall.

"A merry Chrisimas, you dear good soul!" I cried. "Will you ever forgive me for putting you to all this confusion?"

"Nay, Master Francis, 'tis the sort of trouble I love; and the captain, God rest him, was never so happy as when the hall was filled with young folk,"

I thought I could read an allusion to myself in her words, but just then the party were descending the staircase and I was in time to greet them seasonably at its foot.

When we had shaken hands all round, and everyone in a marvellous good humour—although Aunt Deborah kept a sharp eye on her two fair charges and the mistletoe—I noticed for the first time that she was ready dressed for the journey.

"Nay, Miss Meadowes, you cannot leave

us so soon," said I, taking her hand and leading her to the window of the dining-room. "Even church will be impossible after the storm of last night," and I pointed to the distant spire. "Look for yourself. We are snowed up, and I greatly fear you will have to put up with our poor fare for the time being. No one will be out o' doors to-day."

I saw those bright dark eyes of hers contract as she realized the truth, and then a mischievous smile twitched the corners of

her mouth.

"You are both right and wrong, Mr. Davenant," she cried triumphantly. "Here is someone abroad, and unless I am very much mistaken, you are about to have other folk trespassing on your hospitality."

There was indeed the figure of a stout gentleman struggling up the garden, carrying another figure in his arms, too, and I

ran to the front door,

"Odds rabbit it!" cried a husky voice out of the folds of a blue mantle. "If I had any breath left I'd ask you to accept my apologies for this intrusion, sir; but you look like a gentleman of brains, and the thing speaks for itself. Yonder's my chaise and four, jammed hard and fast in a snow-drift. I'm Colonel Norton—this is my daughter—and here we are!"

As he set her down on the topmost step her hood fell back, while I held out both hands to help her in, for she seemed to

totter, as I thought.

If Miss Meadowes' nieces had been pretty—and they undoubtedly were—this face was surely the loveliest I had ever seen, with hair that shone like spun gold in the sunshine of that Christmas morning.

I had looked at my own visage while I was shaving—a little bitterly, as usual—finding it liker to the edge of an axe than anything else in what that rogue Billy dubbed its long, strong, legal contour; but now, as the girl's sweet mouth parted with a smile of gratitude, a wave of colour swept over the dimpled cheeks, and there was something in the grave, wide-open, almost childlike eyes lifted to mine that told me I had met my fate at last!

"Gads life! but the snow this winter beats anything I ever saw in Flanders—and you may take that on the word of an old cam-

paigner, sir!" cried the colonel.

"What!" thought I. "Can this be Uncle Barnaby's brother officer, Tom Norton, of whom I had heard so much? And could be have been 'the other'?" His bluff, hearty voice rang loudly down the passage, and then suddenly trailed off into a startled gasp as he stared openmouthed at my assembled guests.

A curious little scream came from the dining-room. Miss Deborah Meadowes had

fainted!

Even after this lapse of years my brain is in a whirl when I try to recall that Christmas Day! It was all so delightful and so unplanned; and yet so exactly what

a Christmas Day should be.

Had we schemed it out we had never succeeded half as well as chance had done it for us. What a feast that good dame provided, and what a picture we must have presented to the eyes of that goodly row of Davenants who seemed to smile at us from their frames on the wall!

I had set Colonel Norton at one end of the table, with Aunt Deborah at his right hand, while I took the other end with

Betty beside me.

As for the rest, all I know is that Billy was mighty attentive to Mistress Joan Meadowes, while every time I glanced at Jack Jesmond it was to see him besieging her sister Margery with those deep-set, eloquent eyes of his.

Not that I paid much heed to either of my old friends, for I had suddenly discovered a new world of my own-my own

and Betty's!

We had William and Mary into the room before dinner was ended, and drank their healths with gusto, Mrs. Blanchflower blushing like a peony when we filled their own glasses and insisted on her replying to the toast.

How she curtseyed to us each in turn, and grew ever more and more scarlet—until the sight of me seemed to bring back memories of my Uncle Barnaby and a flood of tears.

into her motherly eyes.

She looked at me, and at Betty, and crying, "Bless you, my dears! Heaven send that you may both be very happy!" almost ran out of the room, none of us knowing in the least what she meant at that time.

I learned afterwards, as indeed I learned many things that wonderful Christmastide, but we rose with the ladies, and followed them into the drawing-room, where an ancient harp-ichord proved to be in quite respectable tune, and the fiddle and guitar only waiting in the corner.

"Bless my soul, Debby! You and I have



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"'Ladies, my poor house is at your disposal,' said I, and we al! three bowed with the candles in our hands"—p. 144

Drawn by H. M. Brock

seen some strange changes of fortune," said my uncle's old brother officer from the depths of an easy chair. "But, egad, madam, I vow this meeting of ours after twenty years is the strangest of them all. 'Pon honour, the sight of your smile makes me young again!"

"For my part I should rather put it down to poor Barnaby's port," said Aunt Deborah with an inscrutable lift of her shoulders.

I can still hear the tinkle of the harpsichord and Jack Jesmond's Spanish serenades down the long vista of time.

Billy fiddled to Joan's accompaniment, and I sang, having some voice in those days whose chords found echo in sweet Betty's heart, as she has since confessed.

We danced, too, and Colonel Norton, remembering that one Sergeant Blanchflower had been famous in the Royals for his horn-pipes, we made William foot it merrily, which he did exceedingly well, to his good wife's surprise.

And the fire crackled, and the candles shone on the colonel's red coat and Jack' gorget, and when we were tired of playing games we talked, with the curtain shutting off the chill of winter outside, each with the partner of his choice, not at all after the manner we three had thought to pass our Christmas!

It was the afternoon of the third day, and snow deeper than ever, when I met Betty at the bottom of the staircase.

She had gone in search of some music from her trunk, and I on the listen for her return.

The berries of the mistletoe over our heads seemed to have turned into orient pearls, and her hair more than ever like spun gold to me.

"I am your host, Miss Norton, and would scorn to take advantage of the old custom —unless you wish it, Betty?" I faltered.

"But I do wish it!" she whispered, and her face lifted to mine as I had first seen it on the day of her arrival.

"Sweetheart," said I after a longish interval, grown very bold with the assurance of twenty-five. "We will find your father at once!" I opened the door of the drawingroom and closed it gently. Miss Margery and her captain were alone on the striped settee, dispensing with mistletoe altogether.

In the dining-room knelt Billy Vane with Joan's hands in his, and I had no mind to disturb their happiness.

"There is but the oak room for it," I whispered, and thither we went, only to pause amazed at the last surprise of all, for the colonel and Aunt Deborah were standing before Uncle Barnaby's portrait, his arm encircling her waist, her head resting against his ample shoulder after many days!

"Eh, what, you rascals? Taken us by surprise, have ye?" he shouted, blushing like a boy to the roots of his powdered wig.

"Nay, sir," said I, laughing in spite of the anxiety under which I struggled. "Since you have found happiness at last, here are we wanting only your sanction to share that happiness with you!"

"Odds rabbit it!—Betty!—Deborah! what in the name of goodness is this all about?" cried the old gentleman, searching vainly for his snuff-box.

"Don't be a fool, Tom!" snapped Miss Meadowes, and I could have kissed her there and then for the smile that she turned upon us both. "I've seen it coming from the very moment you set foot in this wonderful house, and so would you, if you hadn't been blind! Remember, he's Barnaby's boy, so give 'em your blessing, or I vow, sir, you shall never have mine!"

"And as for blessings, my dear Miss Meadowes," said Billy Vane from the door behind us, "Davenant is not the only one in search of those things too often denied to deserving youth. Joan and I are here to tell you we have made a match of it, and, egad, unless I'm mightily mistaken, here come Jack Jesmond and Miss Margery on the same errand!"

"Tom Norton, bring me my smelling salts as soon as may be!" cried Aunt Deborah. "Tis a good thing for some folks I wot of that I refused poor Barnaby Davenant after all!"

"Sergeant Blanchflower," said I, as the old dragoon appeared bearing a fresh scuttle of coals, "to-morrow morning take down that notice board at the gate, if the snow will let you come nigh it—Liberty Hall is no longer for sale!"





A typical street scene of China

rhoto: Alexander Stewart

MAN POWER IN CHINA Alexander G. Stewart

OR months past the problem of China has been uppermost in the thoughts of the chanceries of Europe. More especially has it been a source of worry and bewilderment to Great Britain. If France has found her thorn in the flesh in Morocco, Great Britain's trouble in dealing with China is of quite a different order. Riffs in North Africa, the Boers in South Africa, the Irish-so close to our shores each in their turn offer the problem of a small nationality striving to express itself in its own way, and coming irritatingly up against a Great Power close at hand. The problem of China is, however, very different. It is not the problem of the small nationality. The great central fact of the Chinese situation is Man Power. China is teaming with humanity. It is a country numbering more than four hundred millions of the human race. One person in every

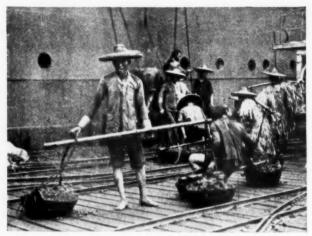
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four, in other words, is Chinese. Think of it!

Before now we have been at war with China. At the dawn of the New Century we forced our way on Pekin to rescue our imprisoned embassies. We won through—but it was like David and Goliath as far as numbers go. Suppose all the losses of all the combatants in the Great War fell upon China alone, what difference would it make to the three hundred and ninety-nine millions who would still remain?

With the vastness of China, its old civilization, its teaming cities, and ancient prejudices, it would seem impossible for the Western World to make much headway. Yet that is not so. Outwardly, things go on much the same as they have done for centuries, but in reality a great change is taking place in China. The change is not coming gradually even; it is advancing



Coaling is done by hand in China

in through the flood gate. Machinery, engineering, railways, telegraphs, wireless, and machine guns, all are penetrating into the country.

The tide advances, but every now and then comes the reaction. It was so in 1900 at the time of the Boxer Riots. At the present time there is a remarkable movement spreading through the masses, principally by means of the student classes. The movement is inspired by suspicion—suspicion of the foreigner and foreign ways,

foreign teaching, the foreign schools which the foreign mission-aries have dotted up and down the land. The greatest care will have to be exercised by diplomats and missionaries in dealing with a trying situation.

But whatever suggestion you can make, or whatever method can be advocated in dealing with the problem, one comes back sooner or later to the dominant consideration — the vast Man Power of China. Because of the hugeness of the population it affords a wonderful field for our

exports. The boycott of British goods in China means distress in Lancashire. On the other hand, the incessant flooding of the market with cheap Chinese goods would mean unemployment to thousands in a country such as ours where labour is well paid.

That is one of the troubles of China—human life is an extremely cheap commodity. In China man is the cheapest animal, also the cheapest machine, in sight: no one seems to care if he is overworked or not: if he falls there

are others eager to take his place. It does a coolie not the least bit of good to go on strike if he fancies that he is underpaid (which he certainly is) because there are thousands of others who believe that they could manage to make a living where he has failed.

A Chinaman wants to work. He must work. He wants to work hard. He wants to feel that he is really earning the stipend which he receives for his gruelling toil. He wants no new contrivances to make work easy. Indeed, he would be the first to com-



More than a horse could carry
A scene in Pekin



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A Funeral-by hand



Hauling the Ice by hand-a warm job!



A boat that goes by man-power
The paddle is turned by means of men treading on the "machine"



The old water carrier

plain that his livelihood was being taken from him if any new-fangled arrangements to lighten the labour of his age-old customs were to be introduced. It is surely his perquisite to work hard, he and everybody else admits it. He has been raised to the idea of work and likes it. He can trundle a burden of half a ton in weight on a one-wheeled "push mobile" with considerable celerity where a moment's misjudgment would mean disaster: for the laws of gravitation and balance are quite as persistent in China as they are everywhere else.

An ice van, which needs over a dozen coolies to make it proceed smartly upon its dignified way, warms a Chinaman's heart, even though it is raining; in which case he can wear a waterproof coat made like a palm leaf thatch, which sheds water and is light into the bargain, a vegetable mackintosh, ventilation guaranteed. Here is a funeral, with twenty pall-bearers to handle the coffin. This is evidently an honorary display of men as a compliment to the deceased, and since the embroidery on the casket blazons forth the colours of the Republic, the man may have been of some political importance.

And so, to return to our theme, as may now be easily realized, to speak of horsepower in China is bound to be for some time to come like speaking of candle-power at high noon: so long as there is plenty of light there is no need to mention candles, you have something else which for the time being is vastly so much better.

This lack of proper comparison is partly because the horse of China is a poor specimen at best; while for endurance, energy and intelligence a first-class coolie is something to marvel at. He is dynamic and tireless, and will do the work of a horse on a much smaller allowance of food.

In less than a score of years this coolie will, perhaps, have a vote in a land which has always been, and no doubt always will be, one of the great powers of the world. Greater in itself and toward itself, perhaps, than in its inter-exchange with other great nations. The "bolshie" idea may seem for the moment to disturb China's onward trend and outward calm, but her balance is hardly likely to be affected, as China is not a sleeping dragon and never has been, unless you define the lack of

sleep as being a Hun-like propensity to enlarge Empire. It may be mentioned to China's credit here that many centuries have passed since she has invaded other territory for personal gain. She has had internal troubles, she has suffered invasions, she has paid out vast indemnities, but she has not been awake as Japan has been awake; which is rather fortunate for the rest of the world when one considers what her vast Man Power would become, unleashed, if she once became possessed with a definite idea of conquest.

China's lack of a "foreign" policy is fundamental in her and amounts almost to a religion. A Chinaman is so busy that he seldom finds time to worry about other people. His civilization is sufficient for him and answers all the questions that Life demands to be answered. So long as he has a son to worship at his grave, as he worshipped at his father's, he has not lived in vain: he says with that other great philosopher, "give me a son—and I have immortality."

All great national movements are purely economic. When China expresses a wish to conserve her Man Power, which is her life, by reducing personal effort with the use of machinery, there is bound to be a great upheaval; but as yet this has not happened. In fact, given a piece of machinery a Chinaman ceases to consider himself as "working" at all. Work has

MAN POWER IN CHINA

become play to him; and who can wonder, when a Man Power, smaller edition of the same steam-roller idea, becomes as strenuous as Tantalus in Hades. For instance, the tread-mill boat, with an endless ladder for coolies to climb "to make the paddle-wheels go round," holds no records for speed so far as boats go, but for the individual exercise of footwork the poor coolie must match "time" and "endurance" with the best exponents of the nimble toe upon the professional stage to-day for ten times the hours and one-ten-hun heddths of the pay.

Western Whether civilization will be able to teach China a great deal about the intricate rating of horse-power as applied to steam, petrol and electric motors and engines remains to be seen. Though like as not she may find means to transpose the new knowledge when it comes into a term which will mean so much more even to "an old China hand," namely, Man Power.

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China grows slowly. She is cutting off her pigtails, and will be doing so for a hundred years to come. Girl babies are allowing their feet to grow, and "big " shoes are already the vogue; but even in a century's time you will still be able to find lily-feet if you are a connoisseur in such delectable trifles. For Chinese traditions are far less affected by other civilization than the out-ide world will ever fully realize. To live amongst the Chinese does not cause one to "love" their traditions, or to even understand them, though much can be forgiven a race that is energetic and demonstrates her convictions of industry so aptly as does China in Man Power.

Draped along the top of a wall in a Mandarin's garden in Shanghai is a most beautiful bronze dragon. The workmanship is masterful, and the "likeness" good. But what does it signify? In China the dragon symbolizes male and power. Of course, it meant the Emperor in the old days. To-day it can still be used to designate the present ruler of China—and by the same token Man Power also.



A River Scene-with the inevitable man-power at work

The Music of Wagner

For the Listener-in
By
Percy A. Scholes

Another article in a series designed to help people interested in broadcasting.

GREAT deal of Wagner's music is to be found in the broadcast programmes of all the stations, and many people (especially, perhaps, those who live away from the great centres of population) are now, for the first time in their lives, able to make an extensive acquaintance with it. The present article is an attempt to give in small space the main facts about Wagner and his work, and to give them in such a way as will lead to more interested and more understanding listening.

Wagner's Boyhood

The father of Richard Wagner was a small civic official at Leipzig. He was devoted to poetry and drama, and his son inherited the taste. Indeed, as will be seen shortly, there are some grounds for the paradoxical assertion that, in the mind of this great musical composer, drama always ranked before music.

Richard, born at Leipzig in 1813, never knew his father, who died within six months of his birth. His mother, left in poverty with a large family of small children, married again—one Geyer, by profession an actor and playwright, and in spare time a painter.

The inherited dramatic leanings of the child naturally found encouragement from his surroundings. But the new father died when the boy was only eight and a half, asking in a faint voice the very day before his death, as he heard some simple pieces played by his stepson on the piano in the next room, "Do you think he may, perhaps, have a gift for music?"

This guessed at gift did not actually prove itself very early. The boy wrote poems, and at fourteen a long and involved tragedly compounded out of Hamlet and King Lear, his musical achievements being limited to stumbling performances of such things as extracts from the operas of Weber, then at the height of his fame as

an opera composer, and resident at Dresden, where the family now lived—"When Weber passed our house on his way to the theatre I used to watch him with almost religious awe."

The eldest sister got an engagement as actress at Leipzig, and the family returned there. At the famous and historic Gewandhaus concerts of that place Richard first heard Beethoven's symphonics, and was strongly affected by them. He now began to take lessons in composition, but he and his teacher were not on sympathetic terms, and progress was not rapid. On Christmas Day, 1830, when he was seventeen, an orchestral overture of his was performed in public, but it was not taken seriously by the autlience. Indeed, they laughed.

A couple of years later a sound teacher was found for the youth, one Weinlig, who based his teaching not upon abstract theory, but upon the careful study of actual masterpieces. Six months of such teaching sufficed to put the young composer on his own legs, on which henceforth he ran without aid. But he was always studying Beethoven. He soaked in Beethoven, we may say. He wrote a symphony (of no importance), and at last an opera. He was now upon the road which was to lead directly to the field of his life's work

Early Operatic Struggles

At twenty Wagner obtained a petty post as chorus trainer in the Würzburg theatre, where his eldest brother, a tenor singer, was actor and stage manager. (Note how persistently the dramatic instinct comes out in various members of this family.) Opera conductorship at Magdeburg, Königsberg and Riga followed. Then, at the age of twenty-six, he visited Paris, to attempt to get a hearing of his opera Rienzi; but soon fell into poverty, barely supporting himself by menial musical work of many kinds, such as copying out band parts and arranging opera airs for cornet.

At twenty-nine he was in Dresden, where Rienzi was at last performed, followed by The Flying Dutchman and Tannhäuser. For six years he held the position of conductor of the Dresden Opera House.

New Ideas in Opera

A new element was already making its way into Wagner's music. He was departing from the stock conventionalities of opera, and throwing a weight upon the dramatic side to which listeners of the day were unaccustomed. He was an innovator, and consequently had to face opposition. But a band of supporters grew up around him, prominent amongst whom was the pianist-composer Liszt.

Lohengrin was the next opera, and we may say Wagner's last, for after that his departure from the accepted style, with its set solos, its clear-flowing vocal parts and its simple orchestral accompaniments, was so marked that he dropped the very word "opera," and for all his subsequent works adopted the term, "masic-drama."

In 1848, aged thirty-five, Wagner became mixed up with the revolutionary party. He took some part in the fighting in the streets of Dresden. He escaped arrest, but was banished. He fled to Switzerland, where he lived for twelve years, until pardoned. He pursued his work, however, and travelled from time to time, in 1855 paying a long visit to London to conduct the concerts of the Philharmonic Society.

His Tristan was attempted at the Vienna Opera House. They gave it nearly sixty rehearsals, and then put it aside as impracticable. All over Europe both support and opposition to Wagner and his theories were growing. In many places Wagner Societies were formed by enthusiasts and opposed by antagonists. Pro-Wagner and anti-Wagner parties came into existence in every musical centre.

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The turn of the tide came when the King of Bavaria invited him to settle at Munich and make that his headquarters. At last (1876, when he was sixty-three years of age) a special theatre was built at Bayreuth, and from that day to this the little Bavarian town has been the Mecca of devour Wagnerites from all over the world. There his widow and his son Siegfried still carry on annual festival performances of his works.

Wagner was purely a stage composer. Such music of his as is heard at concerts, or is broadcast, is taken from his operas and



Richard Wagner

music dramas. Any very occasional exceptions from this rule are merely performances of early works, kept just alive from what we may call merely pious antiquarian reasons, with the one example of the beautiful Siegtrical Idyll,

Wagner died at Venice in 1883, aged

Wagner's Artistic Principles

Opera before his time, he considered, had been too much a musical art. It is true that not merely music, but stage scenery and properties and acting were in use in the pre-entation of opera, and that its basis was necessarily, in every case, some sort of a play. But the dramatic, the spectacular and the literary sides of the combination were all very readily sacrificed In Wagner's estimation to the musical. opera as it existed up to his time was rather a musical performance diversified by features borrowed from the other arts, than, as he wished it to be, drama intensified by music, or, as he preferred to put it, a combination of the literary, dramatic, pictorial and musical arts on equal terms. He wrote

his own libretti, set them to music, planned the scenery and dresses, dictated the action, and so made the attempt to build up the visual side, the tonal side and the literary side to scale with one another, and to produce not a mere combination of arts, but a new art, greater than any one of them taken

separately,

Candidly, in this attempt to fuse the arts he did not succeed! Even in his works musical interest predominates. One proof of this is that extracts are constantly performed as items in concert programmes, robbed of their dramatic and visual adjuncts and given purely as music, whereas, so far as I have ever heard, nobody yet has attempted to give the dramas without music. It is clear, then, that music is the predominant element, as it was in the old operas.

To a very large extent the division of opera into set solos, choruses, etc., is abandoned. A whole act goes through without break, one passage merging into another

in a natural way.

The "Leading Motif"

This "all-throughness," as we may call it, is greatly helped by Wagner's use of what is called the "leit-motif," or "leading theme." To the various personages of a drama, or often to any main ideas, thoughts or moods that frequently recur, are attached brief, definite little snatches of tune, and the whole web of the score is woven up by the adroit use and re-use of these little themes.

This method is, naturally, much more flexible than the old one of writing long set songs, each self-contained and necessarily rather artificial and formal in character.

Wagner's Vocal Writing

A great deal of the vocal part in a Wagner music drama is of the character of a very free recitative, i.e. a musical imitation of the inflexions and the rhythms of the speaking voice. Bach, Handel, Mozart and others had, of course, used recitative, but Wagner's differs from theirs in its greater subtlety and its lack of formality, and also in the fact that it has a much more elaborate orchestral accompaniment and one of greater significance.

At moments of high emotional tension the voice part rises to a more lyrical style, and then for a time you hear something anproaching the old opera air, but always more freely and more flexibly treated, and always with the stress laid more upon the expression of the thought of the words than upon the fashioning of a vocal tune that shall be attractive in itself.

The vocal parts of the music dramas are often very difficult, and one charge frequently made against Wagner was that he "ruined voices" by setting them tasks too

exacting.

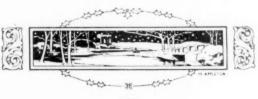
Wagner's Orchestra

To aid him in the vivid expression of dramatic ideas Wagner employed a much larger and more varied orchestra than anyone before him. He also used a much more varied range of harmonies, i.e. of chords. Often his orchestral parts are very "contrapuntal"; that is to say, they consist of many threads of melody intertwined.

In every way, then, the later works of Wagner show a complexity that was quite unknown before him. To the novice this may make their complete understanding rather difficult, but usually the richness of the harmony and of the orchestration is found to be very attractive, and at the present day Wagner is undoubtedly the most popular composer. Certainly no announcement so readily fills a concert hall as that

of a "Wagner concert,"

Apart from careful study of the scores, which cannot be undertaken by everybody, the best preparation for the hearing of Wagner's music is a knowledge of the plot of the opera or music drama from which it is taken, and it is worth mentioning that the libretti of all his works (in German or in English, as may be preferred) can be obtained through any music-seller at the price of a shilling or eighteenpence apiece,



The Three Wise Men MICHAEL KENT

IRIAM and Shem Adams farmed Forey Court at Denne as Adams had farmed it for generation upon generation. But Forey Court is not what it was. It lies deep in wood upon a breezy upland, a thin soil over clay which holds the water till the earth turns sour with it. A dry March can blow the soil away. The fat valley lands have gone from the farm long since, but the house still stands, a hotchpotch of the building craft of centuries. There is a part in half-timbered brick and a part where an ancient Adams has buttressed his pride with Georgian plaster. A room or two is given to store now that Miriam and Shem mainly use the big That saves a fire in winter-time, for one has to cook in the kitchen. are two serving men, old Ike and young Any other name is nearly forgotten. Put the matter to young Ike, now approaching his half century, and he will reply with caution that he has heard say it is 'Oltham or 'Oldham or some such matter. old Ike, who for years has been going "next Saturday " to see about his "old age " at Bishopstone post office, will shake his head and remark that so long as people know him he never bothers with what he's called.

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Life's a fight for all of them, but fighting is a tonic when you have rain, hail and snow, sun, storm and drought to battle with. These lusty gentlemen of the sky are gallant adversaries and hold the point up from the beaten man with knightly greeting, "You ran a gallant course, sir; pray you take comfort and ease your wounds. Another day we'll joust merrily again."

In spite of the way things go, the price of wheat and the dearth of eggs, Shem can always face Miriam cheerfully when she calls him to attention across the table before the pot lid is lifted or the knife blade sings to the steel, to give thanks. "Bless, O Lord, we beseech Thee, all these Thy good gifts to our use and us to Thy service." He can still be hearty in response, though the good gifts alleged, beyond that they may seem poor enough to most, are mainly the result of their own handiwork in kitchen and a-The countryman is always conscious that the mystery of life eludes him, though he may plough the field and scatter the good seed, so that where townsmen remember only that their provisions come from Smithfield or Covent Garden he does not forget that their ultimate origin is holy ground.

It is a cheerful life having its traditional jokes long-standing and never-failing, its habits of kindness, of silent endurance, its times of rejoicing and of ease.

In the long evenings Shem plays cribbage with Miriam. The Ikes, senior and junior, follow the higher call of education, for young Ike has long been teaching old Ike to read. Thus you may hear, "and two for his heels," which is a mystery of cribbage, join issue with "Bee what makes honey, not, 'har' with a tail to it, father."

Now Shem picked himself up from a hard buffet with the east wind rather shakily. All his marches were sheltered by woodland except the east, whence one hardly reckons on gales in August, so that it was a particularly ill chance that at the beginning of that month an easterly gale should butt into his domain, stamp on his wheat, bruise his hops and eat big slices out of his thatch. He was forced to cut by scythe, for the reaper failed to get under the beaten straw. That means long labour and little profit. The battered hops turned brown and would not pay for picking. Half his apples came down to be sold at windfall prices.

Shem chewed a straw and thought it over It looked as though it might mean the selling of stock, and that is the beginning of the end for the small farmer. The only alternative galled him. He talked it over with Miriam.

Miriam. "If we sell stock that'll mean sending old Ike over the hill. That would be great shame to us. We'd best take a boarder."

Never in all its long life had Forey Cours offered the shelter of its roof for gain.

"Would anyone come?" asked Shem.

"It's a dull life for town folks," admitted Miriam. "No trains and such."

"It's either that or selling some cows," was Shem's word at the end of it.

Both of them knew quite well that things would be no better in a little while if young Ike could not take down a couple of milk churns to the train at Bobble Lane Halt every morning. That was the surest stay of their defence.

In the end Miriam, Shem and the editor of the Bishopstone Gazette, with some chance help from the compositor, achieved the following:

"Boarders taken in middling comfortable farm, fowls, cows, pigs; would do all possible to make welcome, moderate cooking and pretty good beds, apply—"

Modesty and a love of the truth had acted in two ways adversely on the announcement, increasing its length and decreasing, its attractiveness.

"Good cooking," the editor proposed, and strove for the deletion of these deprecating adverts.

"It's for others to say that," said Miriam, shocked.

"It's three and four," she announced to her husband as she climbed into the dog cart on coming out of the office.

"Three pound of butter," said Shem, translating into a more familiar value at the current rate of exchange,

There was no great rush of applicants for the moderate cooking and the pretty good beds. In fact, they received only one answer to their advertisement, a Mrs. Masters, who came to Forey Court to abide the welcome of fowls, cows and pigs. She was a tall, thin and querulous old woman without graciousness. She admitted quite openly to Miriam on her first day that she would not have come out there if she could have found anywhere in Bishopstone as cheap. "Forty-five shillings a week," Miriam had asked tremulously. "Reckon it's hardly worth more."

That was a hopeful feeler destined to be cut off.

Mrs. Masters laughed down her nose like a horse neighing. "You'd ask more if it were," said she. It was half-way through October when she came, an uninteresting time of the year, but she settled down in her private sittingroom with her newspapers and her correspondence and her knitting. She gave little trouble, though the first morning presented a difficulty in the kitchen.

Miriam, as usual, set the books at the master's place.

Young Ike, just back from stabling the cob, rolled his empty churns into a corner, washed his hands at the scullery pump and waited. Old Ike had breakfasted long before, and was guiding a spud plough over the stubble of the forty acre.

"Shem," said Miriam, "are we going to ask the lady to the reading?"

"Reckon she won't want to read to herself," said Shem.

"Town folks," hazarded Miriam, "they've give it up, I've heard say."

"Best leave it to her," returned the master. He knocked at the sitting-room door. "Morn', ma'am," said he. "There's prayers on the kitchen table, though maybe you'll fare to do without 'em."

"I'll come," said Mrs. Masters. "I am accustomed to them myself."

It was a great relief.

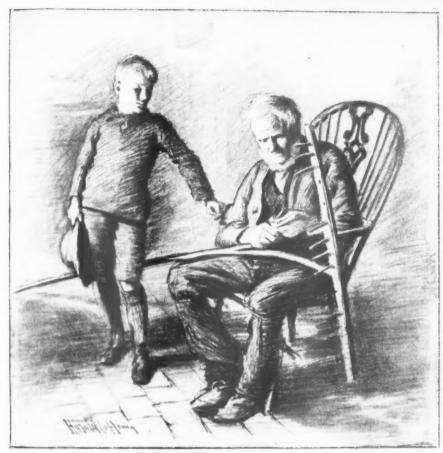
"I am always glad to be among godly people," said Mrs. Masters when they arose.

The words struck Miriam with apprehension. "We ain't clever enough for that," she said. "But I'm in 'opes you'll put up with us. Shall I bring you in some cheese with your pork, ma'am? You're kindly welcome."

The passing weeks revealed the guest as meticulous. At the end of seven days Shem, very red in the face, had thrust a slip of paper from a notebook into her hand with, "Begging pardon, ma'am, the week," and fled. The account ran thus: "To staying with us, forty-five shillings. If satisfaction not given, please take off accordingly."

Mrs. Masters had not taken off. Indeed, she had reminded Miriam that she had been accustomed to take a glass of milk in the middle of the morning. "At a penny farthing a glass that will be eightpence three-farthings. Justice is justice," said Mrs. Masters.

She made her own bed and at times helped Miriam mix the meal for her autumn chickens, or heat the poker red to be dipped in milk to provide an iron tonic for a backward calf. On those occasions her gossip revealed her as a woman of hard justice and scant mercy—God-fearing



""She cuts, sure enough," returned the old man, grinning, and got on with his careful work "-p. 161

Drawn by Harold Copping

tather than God-loving. She was considerably occupied with her own reputation and very doubtful of the trend of modern life. She discussed the question of the evening ribbage with some misgiving. The stage she held as a mere ante-chamber to destruction. She received many letters, some of them registered ones which Jacob Harnden handed over with relief. "Them there registereds and telegrams I never could abide," said he. "One means robbers and the other funerals."

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On wayfarers and poor folk of the read she was specially hard, "Thriftless goodfor-naughts," said she when Miriam had come in once from filling a billy-can with boiling water. The lane past Forey Court leads to the great workhouse on Denne Hill.

"Maybe," said Miriam, "they've had bad fortune. No one knows when they'll come to want."

"Fiddle-ticks," said Mrs. Masters. "Such folk are as bad as actresses, and I can't say worse than that."

It became increasingly plain that saving and a regular life were the supreme virtues in Mrs. Masters's mind. There's a lot to be said for them.

So, reticent, self-contained, cold, she abode at Forey Court while the days shortened and the long nights crept on. The forty-five shillings of her bond were a greately, for nothing now came off the land,

and after the Michaelmas geese were sold little could be expected for months. Eggs, which brought a good price, were scarce. Milk had less profit in it now that the cattle had to be fed on roots.

Shem, looking ahead past Christmas to a distant Easter, thanked Providence for Mrs.

So came Christmas on a wet north-east wind that brought rain first and turned to snow. It fell on Friday, so Shem went into market on the Thursday afternoon. There was essential shopping to be done. Everybody shops at Christmas time. Naturally Shem put the matter to his guest. "Maybe, ma'am, I can do some errands for you, presents and such?"

"No, thank you," snapped Mrs. Masters, very hard and swift. "I don't hold with presents, and I've no one on earth to send

them to."
"That must be terr'ble sad for you," returned Shem gathering up the reins as he slowly climbed into the cart.

"Not at all," said Mrs. Masters. "I do my duty and I don't seek sympathy."

A light load in to market means a light purse coming home. More clearly than ever Shem saw that in the dark months ahead Mrs. Masters was the one hope. It was in his mind that old Ikç was now no longer worth his keep. By the looks of it he would soon have to walk over the hill to "take his bath," as they put it in Denne, where the infirmary is, held to be too sorry an end to be spoken of in set terms. Old Ike's shame was his own, for it had never been the Adams' way to desert an old retainer. Ike had held a horse for Shem's great grandfather.

Half-way up St. Botolph's Hill two shadows in the wet, grey snow confronted him. It was half-past four.

"Can you tell me the shortest way to Forey Court Farm?" asked an unusually distinct and girlish voice.

"Reckon I can, missy," said Shem, grinning, and waited, for it was Christmas time and he would have his little joke.

"Thank you so much," said missy, rather puzzled at the pause. He saw now that she held by the hand a boy of seven. "Will it take me long?"

"Might take you a hour," said Shem slyly, "or it might take you twenty minutes if you do as I tell you."

"Then I'll do as you tell me," she said. That was Shem's joke. "Jump in along o' me," he said. "I'm a-going there!"

From the way missy said, "That is kind of you," he knew that she was tired.

"Let the little 'un curl down in front," said he, "and there'll be room for us all."

The little 'un sat down with his hands on the dashboard and the reins pit-patting on his cap. "Mums," he piped, "isn't it nice to be riding in a carriage?"

"It's very kind of the gentleman to take us up," she said and turned to Shem. "Mrs. Masters is staying at Forey Court Farm, isn't

"She is." Shem whipped up the cob, for the snow was beginning again, dry and powdery. Who was this, he wondered, who came seeking Mrs. Masters, the lonely lady with no one in the world? Surely it would be a happy surprise for Mrs. Masters that these friends should come to see her.

"Mums," broke in the boy after a silence and pointed eagerly ahead. "Is that the Star of Bethlehem, that one in front?"

Shem answered, laughing, "No," said he, "it's the stable lantern at Forey Court, and in two flicks of a bumble bee's eyelids we'll be there. You'll be glad of that, missy?"

"I will indeed," said the girl. "There was nothing else to do."

At the sound of their wheels a broad square of gold swung out to them, glinting in the hardening snow, the open kitchen door

Ike came forth to put the trap up and take the baskets in while Shem led his convoy into the red pantiled room with its coconut matting before the hearth and the open range sending a pleasant barred rosiness and warmth across the room. Old Ike sat in a far corner fashioning a new wooden tooth to a rake, cunningly with his clasp knife-a clever fellow with a knife, old Ike, though he couldn't tell B from a bull's foot! Miriam bent over a brown crock upon the kitchen table, doing her magic upon suct and breadcrumbs and flour. The kettle hissed and the dog lay curled on the hearth with one eye watching it. Holly and greenstuff was piled in a corner, and the melted snow bejewelled it.

"Wife," called Shem, "we got visitors, a lady to see Mrs. Masters."

She came forward smiling, rubbing floury hands together.

"You're kindly welcome," said she. "Bide a minute and shake the snow off before you go in to the lady. "Tis a bitter night surely."

It was one of those still nights with snow that drifts down like little balls of white mimosa.



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THE THREE WISE MEN

"You are very kind," said the girl timidly. "I came to see Mrs. Masters."

"Grandma," said the boy, red-cheeked and

diamond-eved from the keen air.

He was warmly clad, but his mother was not in such good case. A light, neat costume, which would have been none too warm for a spring day, served her. She was frail and delicately pretty, but for a curious look

Shem came in at the moment with the carriage rugs.

"Grandma," said he. "That will be a surprise."

"I'm afraid it will," said the girl.

"The lady's all of a tremble," said Shem to his wife hurriedly. "She best have a cup of warm tea before she goes in."

"To be sure she must." Miriam set a

chair at the table.

Refusal would have been ungracious.

The boy glimpsed the grizzled head in the corner and the glint of steel. He ran across. "My name's Kit Masters," said he. "What's yours?"

"Hike," returned old Isaac, greatly flat-

"Can I try your knife and see if it cuts, Hike?" asked Kit.

"She cuts sure enough," returned the old man, grinning, and got on with his careful

"I wish I were as clever as you, Hike," said Kit wistfully,

Just then the door leading into the sittingroom opened. "I am cold," said Mrs. Masters precisely. "Mrs. Adams, will you please make my fire—"

The girl rose, "Mother-in-law," she

said nervously, "here is your grandson, Kit, whom you have never seen before."

The elder woman stayed frozen on the step. Slowly over her grey face came a tightening, a tightening to eyes and lips, a stubborn recession of the chin.

"I do not know you," she said.

"That is not my omission, mother-in-law," returned the girl facing her wanly. "I have brought you little Kit."

Kit left his wide-eved worship of the old man and stood in front of his mother.

The storm broke. The old woman turned, with a deliberate cold fury, first to Shem, "Why have you brought her here," she cried, "to fawn and beg, this playhouse woman?"

"Truly," said Shem, "I brought her, seeing she asked the way."

"She robbed me of my only son," said

Mrs. Masters. "She took him from me and I never saw him after."

"I wrote," cried the girl. "Many times I wrote to you, mother-in-law. I told you how ill Chris was and you wouldn't answer my letters, would not even come to see him."

"How was I to know," asked Mrs. Masters, "that there was any truth in the letters of a play actress? Wasn't it your living to act? You took him from me, and I never saw him again. I have no part or lot in you." She made a sawing movement with her hand. "Send her away!"

"Dear heart," said Miriam. "It's snowing

cruel hard."

"She robbed me of my son," went on the old woman fiercely. "I've washed my hands of her. Justice is justice."

"Christmas time and all," returned Shem, "Remember, ma'am, this is my house,

The old woman sniffed, "How long will it be your house if I leave it?" she asked, "Do you think I don't know that I am keeping it going? Mark this, not both she and I will sleep beneath this roof to-night."

"But I have not come to ask for myself," said the girl quickly. "It is for Kit, your grandson. I can perhaps get to London and find work on tour, but I cannot take him."

"My grandson," tittered the old woman bitterly and closed the door. She opened it once more and, "Am I to go or stay, Shem Adams?" she asked. "You'll be ruined if I go."

A look as of a fighter cornered sprang for a moment into Shem's eyes.

The girl gathered her small son to her with an arm about his shoulders. "Come, Kit," said she brightly, "we must go back. Grandma is busy." She turned to Miriam. "Thank you, thank you both. But I have brought trouble enough."

The wind had freshened. An icy blast came in at the open door while the old woman on the step into the sitting-room

stood coldly waiting.

"I'll put in the cob and drive you down," said Shem. But with a little run, as though she tore herself away from that comfortable place, the girl gathered the child up and

The sitting-room door closed

"Her own flesh and blood," said Miriam.
"And all the way from London," murmured Shem between his teeth.

Young Ike came in from the scullery. "'Tis blowin' up for a blizzard," said he.

Once more Mrs. Masters opened her door. "My fire is very low," she said with patient reproach, and searched the corners of the place with a second's glance shrewdly.

"'Tis just such a night," growled old Ike, "as they found the tinker froze on Hanging Bank. All curled up he was, with his hands up his coat sleeves an' 'is li'l dawg with 'im tucked in 'is coat. Afore your time, master."

Young Ike stood there in the kitchen doorway blowing on his great red hands, blue-haired and shaggy as a sheep dog. "Ah," he said, "'twill be a terr'ble or'nary Christmas for the little 'un." Just like a sheep dog, too, he had his bright eyes on his master with an eager anticipation.

They were all looking at him. Shem sat a moment frowning at the floor. Then he looked up with a nod to the labour-

ing man, who strode out chuckling.
"That's my own man," said Miriam.
"What comes we'll bide together, Shem."

Old Ike shut his clasp knife up. "Said I were clever," he rumbled. "The young rip! Yes, tinker 'ad a li'l dawg under 'is coat, but a coat's small 'elp on such a night as this, an' a dawg 'll live where a boy 'll die," said he.

II

MRS. MASTERS looked out of her sitting-room window and saw nothing but her own face in the black. She turned away, but she did not sit down. Though the interview had been distressing, she had nothing to reproach herself with. "An eye for an eye." The girl had taken her son; she would not give her house room. She had said that she would not. She did not change her mind. What was a grandson to her in the place of her son?

She slid the catch of the window and pushed the sash up, thinking that she had heard steps outside. The snow blew across the paddock in smeary lines. There was a dim light in the old empty stable, but she could see no one. She went to the kitchen door suspiciously.

"The Whitestall carrier passes the corner at six, doesn't he?" she asked, merely for something to say.

"'Orseflesh won't stand on these roads now, ma'am," said Shem. "It's glass. He'll never stir from Whitestall to-night."

In his corner old Ike was whittling busily at wood with his knife, a paint-pot beside him. Through the scullery door she could see young Ike. He was hammering iron, dull red, upon an anvil. She saw the sparks fly merrily. Miriam bent to the oven door, and the firelight made her face as rosy as a maid's.

There was something in that warm companionship, steadfastly enduring through so great a span of life, that made her envious. She went back to her room. The wind began to whine, and she heard the soft pat of driven snow upon the panes, a pat as of fingers, cold fingers craving shelter. But beyond that a silence brooded over Forey Court that seemed stronger than these sounds. Once in the woods a dog fox barked.

"Justice is justice," said Mrs. Masters to herself. "She took away my son."

Certainly there were footsteps outside. She heard voices, men's voices. She ran to the window. Someone was going across to the old stable with a lantern—the old stable which was never used, what were they doing there at that time of night? A fierce flood of rage swept over Mrs. Masters.

"What I say I stick to," said Mrs. Masters, and tried to count it to herself for virtue.

She went up to her room and put on boots and furs, and all the time her thoughts were racing over the dreary past, seeking to provide her justification. Right? course she was right. How could she have known that the girl's letters had not been a trick to lure and cajole her? Was it her fault that when at last she went to see for herself if her son were really ill she had been too late? It wasn't her fault. It was the girl's fault all through. The girl had stolen him by her wiles. An actress, a devil's pawn, she was to blame for everything. It was just her cunning way to come at Christmas. Some people grew soft-hearted at Christmas. Shem Adams, for instance. Well, the girl hadn't injured him-She would see that Shem Adams obeyed her orders. She went down to the kitchen.

Miriam was alone. Even the dog had gone. She was heating some milk at the grate. It was then eight o'clock.

"I believe," said Mrs. Masters, "that there is something going on here. She—that woman—shall not sleep beneath this roof tonight. I'll be obeyed in the spirit as well as the letter, Mrs. Adams. Where is your husband?"

Miriam stood up, hands on hips, and regarded her gravely.

"The men are in the old stable," said she.



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"Beside her, with shaggy hair and beards, shy, uncouth, heavy, stood the three old men "-p. 164

Drawn by Harold Copping

"I'll go out to them there," returned the old woman. "And I hope I shan't find de-

ceit and treachery."

Miriam followed her to the door and stood watching. Beyond the swept level of the pond was the old stable, a brick built place, long derelict except as a store. The door was open and a faint light came through.

"What must be will be," said Miriam; "but 'twill be a cold Christmas for some of

us and a bitter New Year."

And Mrs. Masters, triumphing in her justice, came walking softly through the snow to the old stable door and looked in.

There was straw on the stable floor, a litter of pale gold, and straw in the manger too. A storm lantern hung to a roof beam. On the straw a market basket stood with sheets and blankets. The paper white of the sheets cut sharp against the background.

As Mrs. Masters thought, the girl was

there-that woman.

She stood at the ledge of the manger wherein the small boy sat in warm night woollies upon a carriage rug spread over straw and drank warm milk from a cowhorn cup. Beside her, with shaggy hair and beards, shy, uncouth, heavy, stood the three old men. One after the other they spoke weightily, scratching at their beards, the master first.

"Well, missy, you're not under the same roof. Straw's good warm lying when you can't get better."

"So it is," said old Ike.
"It is so," said his son.

"And if you'd be so kind we've brought a Christmas for the little 'un," went on the master, displaying a bright new shilling in his palm. "Young Ike, he's made an iron hoop."

Young Ike drew near with a hand to his brow in greeting to the girl. He held out his handiwork. "The young 'uns like to traipse about with hoops," said he. "It knits their bones, and father's got a stick."

Father came forward with a hoop stick,

At that moment, while she was still nursing her wrath, the only weapon she had to defend herself against the voice of her conscience, Mrs. Masters started, for a hand fell upon her shoulder.

Miriam had feared. She had hoped that whatever consequences there might be to the old woman's anger they might not fall until the morrow. Then she had quietly followed her. She had just put out a restraining hand when the tableau, vivid from her journey through the dark, came into view.

"Dear heart," said she, "it's Bethlehem again!"

And all at once there flashed on the cold old woman what that scene recalled. She was by habit very familiar with the text. They had read it over only that morning about the kitchen table. But there drove into her heart instantaneously an exposition so many-sided that no words could completely unfold it; how that the first Christmas brought a new hope to a world grown sick of a hard law and a careful justice, and how every Christmas ought to revive again the new hope here and there upon the earth, and how that was why it was called a day of goodwill, and how such simple goodwill as these three wise men had shown was without measure higher than the barren balance upon which her pride was set.

So she went forward into the stable with words long familiar but only in that instant perceived. "And when they had opened their treasure they presented unto Him gifts."

"We are not under the same roof, ma'am," protested Shem with a forlorn hope.

"You are not," agreed the old woman, but now there was in her voice a fuller and more open note and in her diction an accent less precise. "I am envious and ashamed that you are not." She turned to the girl. "My child," said she, "I have no gift to bring, but will you be more kind than I and give me a daughter and a grandchild to warm my heart this Christmas Day?"



A merry Christmas at Forey Court.

Old Ike has his pound of baccy and young Ike his pipe as from time immemorial. Shem had his driving gloves and Miriam

a warm woollen scarf.

But above all the shadow was lifted, for Mrs. Masters was going to stay at least till Easter, and she would not stay alone.

"I've changed my mind about gifts, Shem Adams," she said, and she placed a cheque for twenty-five pounds in his hands. "But I'm too late for my marketing, so I want to buy the cob from you."

"The cob, ma'am, I daren't sell," said

Shem. "I need the cob."

"That need make no difference," said Mrs. Masters. "I only wanted to buy it as a present for you. You must let me give something for you have taught me the secret of a happy Christmas."



Thinking it Over (W. African Chimpanzee)

Photo : Alfieri

Can Animals Reason?

OT so very many years ago, when people knew much less than they do to-day, and indeed cared less, about birds and animals and the vastly absorbing stories of their lives, it was generally thought that dumb creatures had practically no reasoning powers, and that nearly everything they did was done by instinct. To-day we know that this is not the case, that many birds and animals are quite well able to reason out the simpler problems of their lives, and that instinct plays a minor part

What is Instinct?

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Now what is instinct? One well-known naturalist puts it briefly and clearly thus—that "instinct is inherited habit," and this, though not a faultless definition, will, I think, serve our purpose quite well.

Here are one or two illustrations of instinct showing itself in animals with which we are all familiar. You have no doubt noticed how nervous a horse is when it goes to the water to drink. Sometimes, for no reason whatever, it will suddenly fling up its head from the water and wheel off, and the very slightest sound which ordinarily would not disturb a horse, will cause

Instinct or Intelligence? By H. Mortimer Batten, F.Z.S.

it to start visibly when it is drinking. The reason for this is that, surviving from the ages when the wild horse drank at the desert pool or at the jungle edge, he did so in terror of his life, for it was there that the lion or the panther crouched in hiding for him. Wild horses always approach their drinking place with the greatest timidity and caution, and though that peril has long since passed out of the lives of our domestic animals, the memory of it lives on as an inherited memory. That is instinct—an unknown fear.

Again, see how your dog circles round on the rug, just as, ages ago, his wild ancestors circled in the grass to trample out a bed for themselves. The habit lives on. That, too, is instinct—this time an inherited habit.

Guiding the Birds

Again, it is instinct which guides the migrating birds across seas and continents, for very often it is the young birds, which have never before made the trip, which go first—flying sometimes in pitch darkness buffeted by the storms. This is instinct of another kind—a wonderful sense of direction inherited from ancestors who, throughout time,

have made that same journey. Similarly, it is instinct which guides the adult eels across the Atlantic to the other side of the world to their breeding haunts, and this kind of thing is even more wonderful than the migrations of the birds, for the eels have no landmarks in the ocean depths. This, of course, applies generally to fish migration, which is going on at all times in the sea, and on a scale even vaster than the bird migrations of the air. Many fish travel immense distances through the ocean depths; indeed, their whole lives consist of one gigantic migration, which only death terminates, yet year after year they travel by the same routes, and arrive at the same places almost to the day of the calendar.

Different from Reasoning

These few examples serve to illustrate what instinct is, and you will see at once that it is a power separate and distinct from the power of reasoning. Instinct may guide a bird or beast or a fish or an insect to distant regions, it may even at times warn it of the presence of danger, but it is not instinct which takes a bird or beast through the everyday struggle of life. They have to learn, lesson by lesson, just as we do, how to get on in life, and the majority of them are taught by their parents-generally through the medium of example, but often with correction and punishment thrown in-Once in the dusk of daybreak on the edge of a Yorkshire moor I saw a fox cub-running wildly after the nightjars which were skimming low over the heather, till presently his mother came along and pinned him down, rebuking him roughly. Thus she taught him that he was only making a little silly of himself, that he was spoiling his own hunting, and that never, never, no matter how fast he ran, would he catch one of those fleet-winged nightiars. So the otter mother teaches her kits to swim by taking them out into the water on her back, and similarly she teaches them, by easy stages, how to catch the bullheads in the gravel and how to nose the eels out of the

Parental Training

No matter how strong the instincts of a bird or beast may be, it is apt to fare very badly if it has no parental training. For example, I recall a case of a brood of ducklings which were hatched under an old hen, and, as usual, instinct took them to the water as soon as they were old enough to run about.

But instinct did not tell them that the honey bees which went to the margin of the stream to drink were not safe food, and the ducklings did not understand the fussy cackling of their foster-mother. So they swallowed the bees, and more than half of them died through being stung in the throat. Had their guardian been one of their own kind, as Nature intended, she would have warned them against deadly food, and they would have understood the warning.

Though wild beasts are able to reason out most of the simple problems of their lives, it must never be thought for one moment that their reasoning powers are in any way equivalent to our own. The reasoning power, and the power to apply, is infinitely lower in the highest animal than in the lowest savage, or even in the smallest child. A monkey will learn to sit by a fire and to love and appreciate its warmth, but it is impossible to teach him to keep the fire going by placing more wood upon it. You can lay the pile of wood at his side, you can show him over and over again how simply it is done, and though he may seem to grasp the idea that the wood has something to do with the fire, he is just as likely, if he tries to solve the problem at all, to throw the wood away from the fire as he is to throw it into the fire.

A Jackal's Reasoning

I once knew a captive jackal who used every day to scratch a hole in the ground by his kennel, then carefully scoop up all the slack of his chain and bury it in the hole. Of course the idea was all right. He wanted to be rid of the wretched chain which made a captive of him, and therefore he buried it, but he could never reason out that, even though it was buried, the chain still remained intact and fast to his collar. It is by these powers of deduction and application that man stands supreme, for the reasoning powers of dumb creatures, though wonderful at times, fall just short of that standard whereby improvement and betterment would become possible for them.

Here are some of the most remarkable illustrations of animals reasoning which I have come across. I knew a sheep dog whose name was Lady, and who was wonderfully wise among her wise kind. Lady noticed that when bread was thrown down at the door the sparrows used to throng round it; but she could never catch the sparrows because there was no cover near in which she could hide. Therefore, she hit

upon the plan of carrying a piece of bread to the barn door and dropping it down just outside the door. She then hid in the dark barn, and when the sparrows came she would dash out and surprise them. This she did not once but many times, and I consider it wonderful, because she had grasped the idea of using a bait, an ulterior motive, for animals rarely rise to the level of employing outside means to attain their ends. That is application.

Hiding the Collar

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We have most of us heard of the dog who, having been given a biscuit he does not like, takes it away and hides it so that no one will see that he has not eaten it. An old spaniel I had used to hate to wear her collar, but one day she found her collar lying unguarded on the kitchen table. The cook was not looking-at least, the spaniel thought that the cook was not looking-so she took up the collar, carried it secretly out, and buried it in a deep dark hole in the kitchen garden. Again, a fox terrier puppy, appropriately named Rag, belonging to my sister, was so especially wicked that at Christmas time someone made him a special present of a special whip, which, during the brief intervals when it was not in use as a means of teaching the puppy that he was not to chase the kitten or eat grandpa's slippers, was kept hanging on a hook. One day, however, the whip was left on the floor, and when remembered it could not be Neither could Rag, till at length he appeared very muddy and guilty-looking. Some weeks later the gardener, digging the potato patch, unearthed Rag's whip, deeply buried, and who can doubt but that Rag had buried it?

Probably the most extraordinary example of animal reasoning on record was afforded by one of the larger apes which escaped from the London Zeo not many years

During his captivity he managed to collect a bit of bent iron, a strong piece of wire, and various other burglar's tools, over which he kept close guard. With these he worked away industriously at the wire of his cage, levering and twisting; but no sooner had he engineered a hole than someone came along and repaired it. In the end, however, he sat up all one night, using his implements with determined effort, and before daybreak news reached the curator of mammals that he was free. Civilization began by man learning to use stones and

clubs, later spears and arrows, later still machinery, so surely this ape, who employed tools to escape from his prison, had set his feet on the first by-road to civilization.

So I have tried to give you examples of instinct and examples of reasoning, and I have tried to show that though animals cannot reason to the same high levels of conclusion and deduction that we ourselves attain, reason, nevertheless, and not instinct, guides them in the ordinary affairs of their lives. What is instinct? Do you yourself possess it, and if so, in what form? Believe me, you do. Your whole life bristles with it in a thousand ways of which you are never conscious. No doubt, when you were smaller, you were afraid to go alone into dark places-even your own bedroom. Why? Reason surely told you that there, if anywhere, you were safe, yet you were afraid. Why?

The Unknown Fear

was instinct. To-day, guarded lives, we need not fear the dark places, yet ages ago, when our far-off ancestors lived and hunted-ages before Christ came to earth-the little boy or girl who entered the dark alone did so in peril of the wild beasts. In those days it was necessary for children to fear the dark unless they were with father or mother or their own tribe of people. Thus Nature gave to children the fear of the dark, so that they would not enter the dark places unguarded, and that fear has lived on through the dawns of time,

But, of course, I do not wish you to think from all this that the lives of our wild beasts are full of haunting memories and nameless fears. It has been necessary for me to deal with fear, because in most cases instinct is the offspring of fear, the child of fear. Yet we must not regard the birds which beautify our woods and gardens, or the beasts which add so many interests to the quiet places we love, as living a life full of haunting terror. Far from it. Watch them, and you will see how happy they are, for they, unlike ourselves, have no cares for to-morrow or regrets for yesterday. And we need to remember this -that each is living its own small life, which is just as dear to it as our lives are to us-living its life full of little schemes, of interests, of joys, of aims, sometimes, perhaps, of sorrows, a life which is an exact counterpart of our own, cast amidst the sunshine and the green leaves.



Trying to light a number of small candles with one match

Yule Log Frolics

A Practical Article
By
Agnes M. Miall

"Heap on more wood! the wind is chill; But let it whistle as it will, We'll keep our Christmas merry still."

RESTAURANT festivities and outside attractions, dazzling though they may be, have not dispossessed the big family gathering, at the home of some one of its members, which brings all the scattered kin together for Christmas and Boxing Days. There is no time of year when home is more triumphantly "sweet home," especially when there are young folk who eagerly anticipate its delights. Long live the big, miscellaneous parties of relatives which gather each December 25 round the Yule log or its modern equivalent!

But because these parties are big, in a not too large house, and are miscellaneous, ranging from the latest arrival whose first Christmas this is, through an assortment of children, young folk and middle-aged to the grandparent who looks back on threescore and ten of Noels—because of their essentially mixed and crowded nature, Christmas family parties have special difficulties of their own. And these should be considered beforehand if the gathering is to be a success.

Everyone looks forward to the reunion, picturing endless talk, joking and laughter with dear ones not often met. At first the bustle of arrivals, the exchange of presents and the lengthy dinner fill the time completely and happily. But Yuletide parties are long affairs. The moment inevitably comes when the children, excited and tired, start to quarrel, and the old folk, seated in a wide circle round the fire, find the conversation beginning to wear just a little thin

There is restlessness, a tendency to reiterate, "Well, what shall we do?" with

YULE LOG FROLICS

an emphasis on the last word. And it is then that the host and hostess can give a new, happy impetus to the gathering by having ready some attractive ideas for games and competitions.

I do not want to create labour and expense for hosts who find Christmas already full of both. All the suggestions that will be made in this article are very cheap (in most cases they cost nothing) to

carry out.

As the family party is necessarily so mixed as to age, sex and ability, I have tried to think out amusements which do not depend for their success on these points. But in some cases it will be seen that the frolics are definitely above the heads of the children under ten, and this brings me to some general considerations affecting such little folk.

It is foolish from every point of view to mix the youngsters and the older folk continuously in one room all day. The consequent crowding, noise and different ideas of amusement make everyone tired before

their time and spoil the fun for young and old alike. At the same time small children, excited already by Christmas, cannot be

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The remedy is to provide a separate room, well warmed and ventilated, for the youngsters to retire to at intervals during the day, and someone continuously in charge of it. Nobody will miss all the sociability or get too tired it the "child duty" is taken in shifts, definitely arranged beforehand so that one adult relieves another without displays of fuss or exaggerated unselfishness.

And please, please don't let it be assumed that only the women of the party can manage this responsibility. Plenty of fathers and uncles have great abilities in the direction of organizing the kiddies' games and telling stories, and the women assembled, in any case, will be much occupied with the preparing and serving of meals. If the men and children are sent out in the afternoon for a good walk, the cold air freshens everyone, and the women are given a chance to rest and to ventilate the sitting-rooms.

To return to planned amuse-

ments. As soon as the first pauses in the hullabaloo of talk and the first smothered yawns make their appearance, then is the time for mine hostess, in a voice that will rivet general attention and raise expectancy, to ask someone in the secret to bring in the sugar-plum trees. All the guests will promptly watch the door until the messenger returns with a loaded tray that will draw gasps of delight from the children.

Indeed, the small forest of tiny, brightly decorated trees is a pretty sight. Sugarplum trees are made by taking small branches of fir (or some other conifer may be used if these are not readily obtainable) and sticking them into flower-pots filled with earth. Each minature tree is trimmed as gaily as possible with festoons of tinsel, gaudy penny Christmas-tree ornaments of small size, large chocolates wrapped in gold or silver paper and bright, transparent sugar-plum sweets pierced with a needle to take a thread which will suspend them from the branches. The pot should be wrapped in red or green crepe paper, held in place



An old-fashioned ingle-nook chimney enables Santa Claus' arrival to be made apparently in the authentic way

with gummed paper tape bearing a Yuletide design. The total cost of the little trees will average only a very few pence each.

When the tray comes in, provide everyone of ten and over with pencil and paper, and ask them to guess the average weight of a tree. They have purposely been arranged with branches, pots and trimmings varying somewhat in size, and, of course, they must have been weighed beforehand and the

an older person should draw each child aside simultaneously and write down all the objects on the tree which the youngster can remember (he must not overhear the other children, of course). The prize tree goes to the one accurately remembering the most, and each little person gets one of the remaining trees.

Here is a good opportunity to send the children to the room set apart for them, where stripping their tiny firs will occupy



A carol singing, or guessing carols

after hearing a few bars played, are musical pastimes enjoyed by a miscellaneous Christmas Day party

results averaged to provide the correct solution.

If people seem to have no idea of the right weight, a leader can be given by quoting the weight of either the smallest or largest tree on the tray. Allow five minutes, then collect the papers, read out the results and announce the correct weight.

The person giving the most exact result gets the largest tree, which 's noticeably more enticing than the others; the remainder of the company choose their trees in their order of accuracy.

Weight guessing is beyond small children, yet it is to these guests that the bright little trees make their greatest appeal. So have a separate tray for the "under tens," on which each tree has not only trimmings and sweets, but a small penny or twopenny toy as well. One, more splendid, may boast a sixpenny plaything and be the prize.

Show this tree separately to the children for a minute or two, asking them to look at it carefully and notice all they can. Then them happily for some time. Meanwhile the older folk can play a candle game which would not be safe with the younger members of the party all about.

For this contest small Christmas-tree candles, costing about twopence a dozen, should be stuck on a board close together—say twenty or more in all. Then each competitor in turn is given a box of matches and must see how many candles he or she can light with a single match before it burns down. As only one person can try at once, this game occupies quite a long time and provides plenty of interest for the spectators.

Take care, by the way, that any long, loose sleeves (which are rather in fashion again this winter) are pianed up safely out of the way before their wearer tries her luck.

Before bedtime comes round for the tinies a visit from Father Christmas will double the joy of the day, and is easily arranged. Daddy generally enjoys appearing as Santa Claus to his excited little family. This, however, is a mistake, for children are quick to recognize other than facial characteristics and to "give the game away" accidentally is the greatest pity. It is advisable to take warning by the wee maiden of four of my acquaintance who joyfully shouted "It's daddy! I knowed him by his speak!" and to get some guest or uncle less familiar to the youngsters to play the part. He, too, is less likely to be missed from the group which welcomes Santa.

Modern chimneys being what they are, the legendary gentleman generally has to appear prosaically by the door. A ringing of a cluster of bells outside the windows may simulate the arrival of the traditional sleigh. Even after dark the children will want to rush to the windows to see the equipage, but this may be prevented if the front door is immediately flung open and the voice of the visitor booms out, "Tell the children unless they keep warm by the fire I shan't bring them any presents."

On entering, a jovial little speech pointing out that the chimneys want sweeping badly and that he was afraid to soil his coat by coming that way, will account for the more conventional arrival by the door. If, however, the Christmas party happens to take place in one of those rare old country houses which boast the ancient enormous



The visit of Father Christmas with its attendant gift-bringing

chimneys with ingle-nooks in them, a much more dramatic arrival is easily possible.

Keep the party in another room while Santa Claus places himself, sack and all, in the chimney corner as if he had just descended. Then tell the children he is due

and let them run into the room, lighted only by a rather low fire. As they enter F at he r Christmas steps out from the chimney place, and to the childish eyes the illusion is complete. The lights can then be switched on and the presents (three-penny ones from a domestic bazaar are perfectly adequate) be distributed.

After this excitement a calming amusement should fill the short interval before bedtime. A singsong of carols round the piano, in which all join, is ideal, for children love sing-



Sugar-plum trees look very pretty and can be utilized for competitions both for grown-ups and children

ing, and music of any kind has a soothing effect.

When the Children Go to Bed

After the juvenile bedtime an ample choice of fireside games with a mildly intellectual flavour will commend themselves to grown-ups weary in body with romping, meal getting and so forth. Man and his object, clumps, the spelling game, consequences, etc., are too well known to need description here.

Buzz is simple and causes roars of amusement. Sitting in a circle, the players in turn start calling the numbers, beginning with 1, as rapidly as possible; but for every number containing 7 or a multiple of 7 (e.g., 7, 17, 21, etc.) "buzz" must be cried instead. This sounds simple, but as the numbers increase in size it is difficult to think rapidly if 7 is involved, and mistakes become numerous, each putting the player making it out of the game. After every mistake the numbers start again at 1.

Noun and adjective, played round the room in the same way, is more strenuous. In the first round each player must name in turn and without pause for thinking an adjective and noun beginning with A, such as artful ant, antiquated aunt, etc. The next round goes on to B, and so on through the alphabet. The words must be produced without hesitation at the right moment, and adjectives and nouns already mentioned must not be used again by a later player. A different person should start the round each time, so that the disadvantage of coming towards the end, when the obvious words have been exhausted, is shared by all.

For Boxing Day

For the late evening, when games are stale, or for Boxing Day, few things are more fun than a pierrot troupe, got up almost impromptu. This should consist of not more than three or four people (to leave enough for an audience) who have the opportunity for one or two rehearsals before the date of performance. Everything should be as simple and makeshift as possible, the object being to provoke mirth rather than to give a classical concert.

I recall a very successful troupe of four who formed themselves rapidly for the entertainment of a big group of guests at a small country-house party last Christmas. Time allowing of nothing in the way of costume-making, we called ourselves the Pyjama Pierrots, men and women alike being able to furnish themselves with this garment (worn over various others for warmth).

Not Serious at all

Apart from the performance on Boxing Day, most of Christmas Eve was blithely occupied in making ready-really the most enjoyable part of the affair. No serious items were allowed, but severally and unitedly we made up a programme of comic songs, burlesques after a music-hall (a long way after), piano items, a charade which the audience had to guess, and so on. Such dressing-up as was done for this last item was accomplished over our pyjamas, which added to the ludicrous effect.' At the beginning and end of the performance we sang a few lines hurriedly written for the occasion, containing certain personal allusions hugely enjoyed by the audience, and set to a well-known tune. In fact, the more such a troupe can introduce family jokes and chaff of one kind or another into their items, the more uproarious does the affair generally become.

We helped the effect by typing programmes on the host's typewriter, in which we gave ourselves burlesque versions of our own names.

And the jazz band! I mustn't forget the jazz band! One of the men pierrots, too shy to sing, was delighted to take charge of it. It accompanied every item of whatsoever description, and provoked as much mirth as all the other "turns" together. And it was so cheap and easy to get together—a varied selection of tin baths, saucepans, child's drum, mouth organ and anything else that would give forth a note when blown or struck! The player showed himself a true artiste in the varied and appropriate effects he drew from this "orchestra."

We happened to be an entirely adult troupe; but schoolboys and girls from twelve to seventeen, possibly advised by an older person, will be found wonderfully ingenious in putting together a non-sensical show of this kind, which will amuse them hugely in the doing and vastly entertain their elders gathered together for Christmas Day.



Glopious Dust

ARBOR HOME stood on a high, high hill. Its turrets were so near the heavens that on cloudy days they dusted off the white, powdery edges of floating sky-ships. And at night the little stars, sailing up and by, had to keep a weather eye out or they bumped into the towers and fell. A white road swept majestically past and dashed away into the tunnelled greenness of a thick forest. The lawn went down . . . oh, quite down . . . into the road on this side, and the wooded ravine on that, and nobody knew what on the other. It seemed to ride on and on into the country of the sky.

Guarding the house and the grounds and the road and the very sky itself, stood a great iron gate with a lock hung on a chain and swung across its vest and into a pocket,

like a man's watch.

Sometimes the great gate opened and a little wisp of broken humanity slipped in. And the gate closed again. This was how Sandy had come, a tattered little fellow with a homely face and wistful eyes, clanking a heavy brace. Thump-thump down the hall; thump-thump up the stair. Hardly anybody knew that it was, in reality, a sword clanking at the side of the mighty warrior, Sandy Meed.

Some mother would have loved Sandy. She would have snuggled her nose in his soft pink neck and covered his plump, babyish hands with kisses, and told him what a fine, straight boy he was growing into, and what strong legs he was getting, and how . . soon now . . he would be racing and swimming and playing ball and shouting through all the other proud and happy games of boyhood. If Sandy had had a mother she would have told him this. But he hadn't.

And perhaps it was because he had to make these things up for himself, and perhaps it was because Harbor Home hung nearer the sky than the earth, that Sandy came to live in his imaginary world. From so lofty a look-out one grew friends with the stars and quite at home along the milky way...

all peaceful, cosy bodies like the inside of a little cripple boy. But the earth down below, with its racing roads and its trumpeting chariots, and its splendid, terrifying cities, and its voice that called across the sunlit days and the starlit nights . . . Ah, there was the marvel that set a child's heart pounding and his small head swimming! People there were who actually walked down the path and through the gate and straight

into this wonder of a world.

From the highest point of the many acres surrounding Harbor Home a giant oak spread its shade and lifted three gnarled roots for seats. During the play-hour between supper and the Go-to-bed-bell this was a barkentine poking its nose into uncharted seas, exploring the frigid zones, or hot on the trail of some lawless frigate. General Meed was her relentless commander. All the heroes of all the ages sailed with him: Robin Hood, Ali Baba, King Arthur, Lafayette, Aladdin. Africa lay south by east, and the North Pole shivered to the north, and the cannibal countries were always west.

As in those primal voyages, disputes frequently marred their journeys. Sandy was the recognized leader because he could think up such wonderful things to lead them into, but sometimes Toto or Micky grew ambi-

tious.

"I'm Columbus," sang out Toto, when the list of heroes had grown slim. "And I'm discovering America."

It was a masterstroke. They had to let him have it.

"Go on and be him," said Sandy. "I'm Balboa. He discovered the Pacific Ocean from a mountain. Here's my mountain and here's my ocean."

"That's not the ocean. It's America, and I'm discovering it," shricked Toto, pounding an ineffectual little crutch into America. Sandy advanced threateningly. "Get out

of my ocean."

Mary Agnes, a skinny, dark child, older than the others and with mothering proclivities, always took the part of whoever was getting the worst of it. She perceived

now that Columbus was about to. "You hush, Sandy Meed. He can get in it if he

"All right, then . . . he's drowned . . . dead."

Little Columbus set up a wail and couldn't be quieted until Balboa grew remorseful and suggested that they wrap him in a flag and bury him with military honours. Thus thrust in the limelight, Toto was mollified. He was very jealous of his grave, however, and demanded that the band play "Star Spangled Banner" whenever the ship passed over him. This grew to be a nuisance in time, and they would much rather have had him back, but nobody can raise the dead, and so they had to avoid that part of the

But the most wonderful game of all was the game of The Land Where Things Come True. After the sun had set and the distant world grew hazy, they gathered at the foot of the tree and played that each had the thing that he hadn't. Sandy and Mary Agnes strong legs; Micky a straight back; Abraham good eyes. Toto threw away his And they opened the gate and stepped forth into a world where everyone was well and straight. From this beginning (most of them were too small when they came to remember the outer world) must have grown the conviction that everybody outside was strong and everybody inside crippled. The difference lay in which side of the gate you were on. One had only to open that gate . . . and step forth into instant perfection. Some day . . . some wonderful, exulting day . . . this would come to each of them.

The air grew cool and smelt of fern beds. The first brave stars came out. Some place, a bird made an evening hymn from a tree. Blue dusk . . . and the world gone dark, A bell rang, its voice sleepy and soothing like the voice of an old nurse. Play hour was ended. From the deck of the barkentine, and the crowded streets of cities, and from the wild and hazardous West, these sons of the road came back to Harbor Home . . . a little row of grey-clad children, thumping and stumbling and picking themselves up and plodding on-

Arabella Prim waited on the steps for them, her plump form all but obliterating the light from the doorway. "Have a care there, Toto. Mary Agnes, help him up the steps. Abraham, catch on to the banister. Throw away that dirty old stick, Micky. If anybody's got any frog in their pocket, stop right now and put him out. Look where you're going, Sandy.

Into the room with its neat, small beds. Arabella Prim tucking them up with brusque, puffing gentleness. Sometimes they dropped into Slumberland as they dropped on their pillows. Sometimes they were restless and the smaller ones fretted and couldn't sleep. When worse came to worse Miss Prim let Sandy tell tales. She was not quite easy in her mind when she did this. Because in the tales Sandy threw away all the crutches: he took the heavy braces off of little legs and kicked them into space with a strong foot. (Feeble cheers accompanied this ceremony.) And he carried the lot of them stalking and strutting over highways and through cities, while all the world paused to marvel at such agility.

Arabella Prim did not know if it were right to encourage them in this rampant game. It might set up false hopes. But, as Sandy talked, they went so peacefully to

All but Sandy himself. What to the others was only a bedtime tale, to him was a living reality. When the house was all quiet except for the creaking of a friendly board, or the small, delighted scurrying of a mouse, he crept from his bed and over to the window. Cats were having a parade along a stone wall, and they made funny me-ows and sputters. The wind grumbled and tried to push the cats from the wall, but the cats arched their tails and pushed back. A cricket flew against the moon, and its cry split into pieces and showered down over the hospital grounds. Yonder past the two tall cedars, past the stone bench and the lilac bush, stood the great gate opening a way into a magic world. Some day he would lift the latch and pass out . . . on his way to the cities.

If, as some believe, there is no plan to destiny, if things do not move in circles, then how did it happen that Janet Carver came down the curving road one day and saw, for the first time, Harbor Home high on the hill, its eyebrows in the stars, its humble feet in the dust of the road. A bell rang, and from every corner of the grounds small, limping figures rose and began a laboured journey to the house.

lanet caught her breath sharply and her hands crushed over her mouth. It came to her in a flash what this house was . . . a home that some far-seeing fraternal order had established for orphaned, crippled chil-

dren. "No mothers." The little figures



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Drawn by Elizabeth Earnshaw

mounting slowly, pausing to rest on crutches. . . .

"Stop!" she cried to the chauffeur. And she sat until darkness had swallowed the house, and the sound of the bell had gone from the trees, and rang only through her empty heart.

The next day she came back and watched

them again.

The third day Janet offered her services free to a plain woman with a hurried expression and a body much too plump for the nimbleness required of it. Arabella Prim accepted Janet as a gift from the gods.

"I want," explained Janet, "to do the little things that a mother would do . . . the tucking in, the songs and stories. To unravel what troubles them and help them grow inside." She paused before adding, and Miss Prim knew that with five words she opened and closed the subject for ever: "I lost my little boy."

Arabella Prim's pencil slipped through her fingers and she went down on the floor after it. When she came up she said

briskly:

"Now, Mrs. Carver, here's our schedule for the day. We aren't very strict. I think you'll find us more like a real home than you expected to." She started to speak of the children individually . . . of Sandy and his peculiarly elastic mind . . . decided to let Janet form her own impressions. Later, she remembered this. Had it been her fault from the start? What she didn't know was that Janet had as much to do with it all as Sandy. When a person starts out on a pilgrimage they help to create the thing they search for.

All she said now was, "You'll know how to fit in better than if I tried to tell you. I'm on the jump from morning till night, and yet there's so much I never get around to. Keep an eye open and you'll find it. Pretty soon "—she shook a warning finger at Janet—"pretty soon, my dear, you'll be as busy as I am."

It was because Sandy was the homeliest child in the orphanage and the frailest looking that Janet took him to her heart first. He had a stub nose and freckles and really funny hair, and . . . that twisted little body. He had also undeniable charm . . . a gallantness that was like a touch of royalty, and eyes that saw . . . Janet could have sworn this . . . things that ordinary eyes did not see.

That very first day Miss Prim was delivering a breezy and tactful lecture . . . the one she stressed most. Janet was listening, watching their faces, watching Sandy's face mostly and how his thoughts took wing and sped ahead of what Miss Prim was only fixing to say. Miss Prim spoke of the many, many places in life opened to handicapped people, for the first principle of Harbor Home was to teach them self-support. They must apply themselves diligently, she said, so that later when they left the home they would be fitted to care for themselves.

Sandy looked up. "But we won't be crippled outside the gate," he said placidly. His little gruff, childish voice; those eyes:

his serene faith.

Janet and Arabella Prim looked at each other. The eyes of each begged the other to deny this. Neither could. It stood.

"It's things like this that wear a body's heart down, Mrs. Carver," said Miss Prim later. "I've heard him say that before. Just you find out what he means and set him right. He's got a peculiar mind. It worries me every day. You may be able to see farther than I do. I can feed their bodies and keep them scrubbed and follow Dr. Marriner's directions to the last letter, but the places where a little child's mind wanders "—she looked helplessly into Janet's eyes—"I can't go somehow."

Janet could go there. She had spent seven happy years walking hand in hand with childhood. She knew its spooky caves, its secret passages; she had sat on wishing carpets and dug for buried treasure. She knew how to slip into their make-believe world without jarring them out of it. Because of this she found out about The Land Where Things Come True, and the game they played under the tree at twilight when the kind shadows helped to hide their in-

firmities from each other.

"Watch me pick up this with my right arm!" "I can see Ireland and Scotland and Mars and eviything." "I'll race you to the fence." "Let's have an Indian war dance."

And in the darkness who knows but what

these things came to them?

Watching from the porch, seeing them dance, Janet peered suddenly forward. Was it the low, swaying branches or were they strong and healthy children leaping about? Why . . . they were. She jumped to her feet . . . then she laughed. "I'm getting right childish."

The Go-to-bed-bell rang. They were filing slowly up the path now, a little limping company. Each child held his hand out as if he carried something. Janet spoke

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to Mary Agnes. "Why do you hold your hands out?"

"We're carrying lanterns."

When the nursery lights had nodded and dozed, and Miss Prim had sighed a period to the day and departed to uncertain rest along a little hall, and the nurses had gone starchily to bed, Janet slipped in beside Sandy. She knew he would not be asleep. They whispered together in the dark. "Tell me about the lanterns, Sandy."

"Well, you see, Mary Agnes is afraid of spiders, and Abraham can't see good, and Toto hangs his crutch in the roots of things, and Micky and me stumbles. And so "—his little, dear husky voice—"and so we carry our lanterns, and we know then we'll get along all right. And we do."

After that, when they came up through the twilight, Janet, too, saw those lanterns glow! She thought, "God puts something into the heart of a twisted body . . . a special gift not granted to others."

Might not some door of existence, closed to the perception of ordinary mortals, be opened through these if only one could

gain their vision?

Miss Prim had said, "You find out what he means and set him right." Janet had the feeling that he could set them right if they could climb up to him. Instead of "setting him right" she found herself groping blindly after him.

She had been telling them one day about the pictures on the wall: a ship, a lovable dog, a famous battle, George Washington. Sandy spoke up. "I like this picture

Sandy spoke up. "I like this pictu best." He pointed to a framed motto.

"But that's no picture," said Janet. "It's a verse from the Bible, a very beautiful one: 'I will give to him that overcometh to sit down with me on my throne."

He raised puzzled eyes to hers, but when he looked back at the motto his face cleared amazingly. He said, "I like this one best."

Miss Prim would have grown excited in her denials. But Janet said quickly, "Tell

us what you see."

His eyes, as he told them, took on that far-away look. He had a child's idea of climbing up on a great white throne. It didn't seem a high, cold place. It was warm and cozy up there. And Somebody put an arm about him and drew him close, and he felt at home and very happy. He could see his little friends limping up to the throne, leaving their crutches at the foot and mounting into its snug comfort.

The children listened like small, immov-

able statuettes. But Janet was trembling. To destroy his belief, to extinguish the spark that could burn from such marred and broken clay would be like striking at the source of all faith. After that she often had him describe his "picture," and the other children came to call it a picture too, and to "see" it. . . .

Miss Prim was against what she thought was so much contortion of the truth. "We must be practical, Mrs. Carver. Where is all this fairy business going to end if we

don't put a stop to it soon?"

Janet did not tell her where she thought it might end. She had studied them for weeks now, and she knew that for hours at a time Sandy had the whole asylum where they hardly knew they limped. Could any surgeon do as much? She said, "I don't see how it can harm them, and it may actually help. Sandy has discarded his braces."

Miss Prim just gazed at her. She was not antagonistic. She was trying to find her way up to Janet as Janet was trying to find hers up to the children. "Don't you give Dr. Marriner credit for anything?"

"Oh, a great deal! I may be all wrong ... perhaps I'm too close to them. But there is something powerful in a child's faith. 'Unless you become as little children'... Isn't that proof that their simple faith is stronger than our accumulation of knowledge?"

Miss Prim floundered in this and ducked

back to safe ground.

"But the object of the home is to teach them to take care of themselves. If we string them along with false hopes we defeat our ends because, in spite of all we can do, most of them are hopelessly crippled. And yet they've got to where they hardly consider themselves so. That's Sandy's work."

"He believes," said Janet softly, "that all he has to do is step out of the gate and his affliction will fall from him."

"Mercy sakes! I don't know what to

Janet chose her words carefully, as if finding her way through a new country. "I believe . . . he might do it. Not the others, but Sandy. His faith is strong enough. I've seen them in the garden at night when no one was looking." A little still interval of silence. Then Janet told her. "They aren't crippled!"

They sat a long while looking at each other. Arabella Prim saw at last what she

had on her hands

That night Miss Prim watched too. Through the veil of falling dusk they could see the little dim figures and hear them singing. Suddenly Janet caught her arm. "There . . . you see."

Miss Prim leaned forward a tense minute. Then her plump body relaxed. She turned

away with very evident relief.

"I see them limping on their crutches."

And Janet saw it now, where a moment

before they had been skipping and leaping. The whole question should have dropped there. But it didn't. That it remained a question in her mind irritated and disconcerted Miss Prim. She called to Dr. Marriner as he was leaving the next day.

"I wish you'd speak with Mrs. Carver."

"Mrs. Carver ill?"

"No, but she's taking the children too seriously. You understand she came here searching for something . . . some truth . . . that might help her accept her own tragedy. Her husband was killed in France through someone's careless mistake. And her little boy was run down by a truck last year. Just accidents, you see, that could have been avoided. She thinks too much about the why of it. And it's making her put an importance on a child's imaginary game that doesn't belong there. That's all it amounts to, really, and yet . . . she's brought up something I can't accept and I can't dismiss."

The old doctor was accustomed to having hard things put on him. He followed the winding path and eased himself down on the worn bench beside Janet, and took off his hat and let the cool air blow through his thinning locks. He thought, with inward longing, that it would be nice to sit here in this quiet place with a pretty woman and no problems to thrash out. But he had

chosen the way of problems.

Janet brought up the subject. . . . He was that easy to talk to. She told him about the lanterns and the "picture," and how day after day Sandy sat watching the road, and how at night he slipped from his bed and with his little chin resting on the window-sill stared from his prison-house into the freedom that lay beyond the gate. The old doctor sat silent, his heavily lined face inscrutable.

"He goes around with that little beaming, hopeful expression, waiting for someone to strike down his iron bars. You see, he's lived so long in his imaginary world that it has come to be more real to him than the actualities of life. His crippled legs are

less than the strong ones he runs on every day." She turned to him searchingly. "Is it all a child's foolish dream? Can the spirit do nothing for the flesh? Is this stick in the path stronger than thought... or hope?"

He answered evasively. "You can put anything first . . . make it the dominant note of your life. High aspiration, sham,

deceit . . ., anything."

She threw her head up in a gesture of controlled anguish. "But what is the meaning of it all? Is life without direction does anything rise from dust? I can lose if it is part of an appointed order, even though I cannot understand. But if carelessness and accident are the highest powers"—she faced him, her eyes a little too bright—"isn't it possible, through some divine lifting up of the spirit, to get the better of these blunders of destiny?"

"A physician must believe so. He knows just how far science can go. He knows that beyond that there rises a stone wall. . . .

But the spirit can fly over."

She sat considering this. It occurred to him that he was not doing what Arabella Prim had taken for granted he would . . . but Janet Carver's eyes had grown more peaceful. He sent a guilty glance toward Miss Prim's window . . . and spoke further.

"Keep to your ideals, my dear. Never lower your banner. Somewhere you'll come out on the mountain top. If it were not for a few like you . . . and Sandy . . . the old world would spin backwards. Read history: some man saw a vision that no one else could see. And with this bubble he shoved the whole stumbling, unbelieving world and its load of materialism a step forward. Kings and armies couldn't have done it. I think that answers your question about the stick."

Janet said, "I've been trying to work out something inside me that cludes shape. Right now I don't know where I am . . . but this helps. I believe that certain things open your eyes to a new level of existence. Loss is one of them. And it has come to me that whatever I'm looking for I shall find among people who have lost something, as these have. It's why I can see them dance at night when nobody else can."

He was a little uneasy. "I wouldn't dwell on it too much, Mrs. Carver. Remember that the sane thing reaches nearer the truth. Any ray of light, any revelation, must lie

in that direction."

Her eves met his reassuringly. "I'll re-

member. You needn't worry." She placed a softly pleading hand on his arm. "Talk with me now and then. It's steadying."

He shook his head as he rode away. He had spoken with such confidence. But alone, "I wish I knew," he said.

Miss Prim's prediction that Sandy "would forget about it" proved wrong. So many of Miss Prim's predictions

"What are you thinking of, Sandy?" Janet asked him as he sat with his eyes on the road.

He said, "Here, it's hard to climb up to the house from the tree. But yonder "—he turned to watch the motor-cars along the road, and how they swung and dipped and rose and dropped from sight—"yonder, just like that you can flip over the hills."

Always the distant hill that seems easy; always the near one that seems hard.

"But perhaps," suggested Janet, "if we got there we should find that hill bard to climb, too."

He shook his head confidently. "Haven't you noticed how everything out there flies? Once you set foot on that road there's nothing you couldn't do. You'll see . . . when I get out!"

When I get out! The steady conviction of his voice. Where had he gotten it? Who was his father... who his mother? What knights of romance, what flashing lances marched behind him and made him what he was? As he talked there seemed to rise from the dead dust of the past a shadowy line of ancestors, handing down to him...a little



crippled boy and quite alone . . . the spirit of victory.

By now the entire working staff of Harbor Home was wrought up about Sandy. It was plain to the least observant that he was getting his house ready. They invented new games to divert him; they fetched forth new books, they went on new excursions. The one thing they didn't dare do was . . . go out of the gate.

Sandy found the same healthy, childish delight in all this that the others did. But alone, his eyes went back to the road and the gate which would open for him soon.

"There never was such a state of affairs," wailed Arabella Prim.

The nurses cried over him. The crabbed old cook made gingerbread men and animal cookies and other delicacies unheard of in homes for orphans. Janet mothered him and brooded over him, but when he spoke of his coming transformation she could not contradict him. But it was breaking her heart.

Summer passed, and autumn touched the trees with a beckoning hand. A soft south wind blew down, stirring life into a drooping forest. "This is over," it said. "Come along." The leaves danced and left their branches . . . and were gone.

Sandy grew quieter. He played less. In his body he was better . . . miraculously better . . . but his face held an ethereal, listening look, as if the south wind had spoken to him and beckoned on to another

It was Miss Prim and not Janet who broke down first and called a meeting of the staff . . . Miss Prim, whose heart and judgment were for ever at war. They all came. Dr. Marriner, the nurses, the junior physician, Old Thunder and Lightning. He managed the finances, which meant that he had the last word always. He reminded them of this by continually rattling the change in his pockets. Every institution has at least one of him.

Miss Prim stated her case, how Sandy was all but disrupting the home and bringing anxiety and grey hairs to hard-working heads because of his persistent belief in what lay beyond the gate. The nurses expressed The junior physician made themselves. sage, analytical statements that smacked of notebooks. He spoke of "my cases" with an air of experience. Old Thunder and Lightning thought well of this and nodded his three chins. Miss Prim's agitation fluttered in and out. Dr. Marriner sat silent, apparently deep in thought. Without a soul knowing it, his eyes fixed Janet's courage to where it could not have gone alone.

She stood apart by the window, her hands clasped over the back of a chair. Presently she turned to them.

"Has it ever occurred to any of you," she asked quietly, "to let him try his experiment?"

Miss Prim put her plump foot down flat.
"He's not strong enough for a shock. When
he failed it would kill him."

"But . . . would it fail?"

They looked at her in dismay. Old

Thunder and Lightning rattled his change, "This is extraordinary, Mrs. Carver."

"The situation is extraordinary. Oh, I know it sounds like a fairy tale. People have acquired the habit of being ordinary... never looking past a certain point of credulity. Yet there must be things beyond our feeble limitations. Death and birth are. We have no power over them, but they persist among us. If faith cannot lift us above ourselves, what can? I tell you "—her voice was low, but it rang and rang—"I've seen them dancing like well children."

They only stared at her. Janet stood her ground. Old Thunder and Lightning, looking merely amused, said, "You mean you thought you did. Miss Prim watched, what did she see?"

"I saw them limping on their crutches," Arabella Prim flung it at him like an admission of shortcoming. "Janet Carver saw what she looked for . . . I saw what I looked for."

"Mrs. Carver was not close enough to judge. You weren't, were you, Mrs. Carver? You didn't go very near, now did you?"—coaxingly, as if he addressed the mind of a child.

"No, indeed! If for one hour of the day they can strike off their shackles, oh, do you suppose I'd risk cheating them of this... of the merest chance of it... to satisfy my own mind?"

"But, my dear lady, here you go asking us to accept the supernatural. Telling us that these little hopeless cripples can make themselves well just by thinking of it. Surely you see the absurdity of it yourself."

The light from the window fell about her ... on her hair ... on the white sanctity of her brow. "If there is anything higher that the soul can lift itself up to ... this is it! His faith can make his body whole. You have no right to keep him prisoner here!"

There was no sound in the room for a time but the little subdued rustle of pocket handkerchiefs. Old Thunder and Lightning blew his nose sharply. Miss Prim had called them together, and now she rose and dismissed them with a grand wave of her hand. On the scarred battleground of her soul she swung heavily one way and heavily the other

"She's right. And unless somebody keeps me from it, I'm going to let him open the gate to-morrow."

Janet turned to her with misty, eloquent eyes, and she said, "If it's true . . . if it

should happen as he expects, I'll take him home with me, of course. And all his life, so far as I'm able, I'll bring him up in his own faith."

Janet was to tell him. She chose the night because she could not bear to see his face when he heard.

"Sandy, to-morrow you are going out through the big gate."

What light came in his eyes, what terrific joy pounded and raced across the homely, small features, she would never know.

He spoke almost at once. "And Toto?"
"No, just you."

"Can't Mary Agnes and Micky come too?"

"Not this time, dear."

His first thought had been for them. But soon the thrill of coming freedom, rushing down like a mighty wind, swept him away. "Out the gate and down the road! Skipping...hopping...jumping! Fine old legs to go on. Won't I? I'll be big and strong, won't I?"

"God help me," she prayed. Aloud, "Big

and strong."

He lay shivering with excitement, planning what he should do and see and hear, his husky little voice going on and on. But after a time he grew quieter, and then silent. He slipped close to Janet as if his timid child's heart clung, just at the last, to the dear familiar things he knew.

Janet's arm held him close. Janet's tears

were hot on the pillow.

They gathered on the steps to see him off, Miss Prim trying to appear calm and looking more flustered than ever, the nurses silent, Dr. Marriner inscrutable as always. Hovering in the background a disapproving, mumbling cook, whose long hours of toil had been brightened by a quaint little tyke and his insuperably gay stories. Old Thunder and Lightning had washed his hands of them the day before. Janet Carver waited outside the gate in her car.

Sandy himself was quite tranquil. His freckles were scrubbed, his hair drenched and plastered. He had a boy scout cap long hoarded against the day. He was so serene and his preparations so pathetic that Arabella Prim's heart misgave her once more. And she stood, irresolute and wretched, afraid to give him his chance...

afraid to deny him that chance.

Dr. Marriner settled things. He put a hand on the frail shoulder. He spoke with brisk and cheering vigour. "Well, young man, here you go. Good luck . . . and God keep you." The last was an echo of inner supplication that rose, without the doctor's knowledge, into audibility.

Sandy started down the winding walk. He was a long time covering the distance. The little group on the steps watched in an agony of suspense and dread. Surely something would stop him before he reached the gate . . . some hand that had directed him until now . . . that had moved in spite of all they could do . . . He had reached the gate. His hands fumbled with the chain and it dropped, rattling against the iron.

Janet had waited in her car by the side of the road. Even to herself she would not admit the possibility of failure. Sandy's room was ready for him, arranged with the toys and articles of a strong and healthy child. She had said to the servants, "A little boy from the home who has been cured

is coming here to live."

Sitting in the luxury of her car, waiting, she found the moment all but unbearable. Shortly now, and she stood face to face with the test of the invincibility of all that she had fought her way up to. Unable to endure the tension she stepped from the car and stood, motionless and a little white, in the clear autumn sunshine.

Then, before her eyes, the gate swung

slowly open.

He stood just inside. He stood and stared, and did not move. Janet had never seen him look so small, so crippled. It came to her that he might turn back; that he, too, had flung all he had of faith and the blind courage of childhood into one high, revealing moment. Would he have the strength to meet it? If he wavered he was lost.

Janet forgot herself and her own problems . . . forgot everything except that she must save him, and started towards him, running

. . calling . . . "Sandy . . ."

He caught the ring in her voice, saw her face transfigured by a shielding, protecting love . . . but to Sandy it could mean only the exaltation of victory! His small face lighted in answer to it, grew transcendent with joy. His arms went up. It was a gesture of release, of wings about to be spread . . . the lifting up of the clay of the earth!

Janet stopped in the road. She saw that the miracle had happened, that Sandy was running towards her. The spirit dwelling in the soul of a little waif, kindled and nurtured, had carried him to victory. And as Janet's arms closed about him the cycle of her life rounded into the perfect design of an Eternal Scheme.

The Christmas ChARM. TREE OF The Rowland Grey

T is a surprise to find Dickens wrong for once in the least known and most charming of all his delightful dealings with Christmas. For he speaks of its own glittering bejewelled tree as "a pretty German toy" merely because it chanced to travel to England via Saxe Coburg and Gotha when the Prince Consort came to wed Oucen Victoria. The real truth is that the Christmas tree has its remote origin in Scandinavia. Norway, Sweden and Denmark regarded Christmas as hardly Christmas without it, centuries before we found out the

pleasant secret.

There is, of course, infinite variety in the ways of giving presents. In North Germany a winged and white-robed angel arrives with an incongruous big basket. She has a rather alarming acquaintance with the doings and misdoings of the nursery, and as she unpacks utters an awful warning to delin-There is, indeed, a dreadful hint quents. that unless amendment be prompt there may be no presents next year! In some parts of Holland it is customary to have a treasure hunt all over the house. A diamond ring may be concealed in a sack of potatoes, a pearl necklace of value may lurk in the coal scuttle, a miniature tea-set may be tucked in grandpapa's roomy slipper, or a fur coat be hidden under the mattress of the best bed.

Dutch children have money-box pigs made of rough ware, pink, purple or orange, which are smashed with much gusto on the feast of St. Nicholas. A grand procession to the fair to buy gifts follows, purchases always including a delectable sort of special gingerbread. Woe betide the feekless little folks who have committed the awful crime of pig-breaking before the right date in December. As to those spendthrifts who have squandered recklessly instead of dropping their silver doppeltjes or twopences into piggy's interior through the slit in his

back, they can but hang their heads in

There is plenty of fun over all this, yet if it were put to the vote among Christmas merry-makers, the ideal way to receive a present would surely be held to be one from a Christmas tree. There is something fascinating about its multi-coloured fruits sparkling on the green branches, not to speak of the piles of dainty packages tucked snugly away at its base. To hear the cry of joy when the curtains are drawn back by Father Christmas in person, to reveal the tree in all its glory in some -qualid slum, where its advent is the great event of all the year, is worth the longest, dreariest underground journey. Even in luxurious drawing-rooms the same spell is exercisedat least, over the very tiny ones-at the In country sight of the vision splendid, villages the first thrill comes with the advent of carts full of sturdy firs from the familiar woods to be miraculously converted "into something rich and strange." Or perhaps there is a private view of the dazzling fairy for the topmost bough, the much-coveted prize. Only last year the fairles came back to an Essex village they had deserted. How much happiness the fairy godmother who brought them bought with a few cheap dolls, a few yards of tulle and a few sixpennyworths of silver tinsel may not be easily assessed.

It is, indeed, a poor heart that does not rejoice when the tree shines forth amid a circle of smiling faces, whether their owners wear smart or shabby frocks. What wonder that the great writers should provide us with trees that are in very deed evergreen, and always laden with just what we desire.

Most of us have heard how the first of all fairy-tale tellers was the son of a poor cobbler with a love for the beautiful. Despite his homely calling, little Danish Hans Andersen had his wee tree in the hut

THE CHARM OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE



"The celebrated singer, Jenny Lind, found him weeping in the streets"

at Odense full of the sweet mutual affection of which wealthier homes are often bare. It seems natural that he should divide the honours with Dickens as chief chronicler of the romance of the Christmas tree. When he became famous he wrote proudly in his autobiography: "My fairy-tale books all came out at Christmas time, and before long no Christmas tree could exist without them."

His heart remained the heart of a child, and an old lady once known to the writer, who was intimate with him, used to tell a story how when he was in Rome one Christmas the celebrated singer, Jenny Lind, found him weeping in the streets. Yet he had been fêted and welcomed. Mrs. Browning in her poem "North and South" had said:

"When to Rome came Andersen
'Ah, but must you take him again?'
Said the South to the North."

His work had been translated into many languages, making him the universal friend of the children. But what were balls and banquets that brought no memories of the dear dwelling at Odense, with its wheat sheaf before the door that the hungry birds might know that Christmas had come.

Jenny Lind, herself lowly born, was full of sympathy. She hurried away, and somewhere found a fir tree and the indispensable gilt apples and walnuts. Then she invited the sorrowful Hans to her hotel. There in the tawdry sitting-room these two simple great ones clasped their hands beside the tree with the time-honoured greetings, and were glad again.

It would be good to think that Hans went straight back to write the delicious tale of the "Conceited Fir-tree." It is a parable to teach contentment in its own lovely way. relating how the foolish baby fir was always dissatisfied and always thinking too much of itself. It was unhappy even in the fragrant forest with the dew-spangled flowers. At last-joy of joys-it was chosen to be taken to the city and planted in a big tub in a fine house. All sorts of sparkling things were hung about it, until its pride knew no bounds. There was a grand party, and all the dancers admired the gorgeous tree. It was afterwards flung into a lumber room, where it vainly expected to emerge and to be made magnificent again. There it was left to wither and boast to the mice, who gossiped as only Andersen mice Nothing was left of the wonderful



"They clasped their hands beside the tree with the time-honoured greetings"

night but a tarnished star carried off by a boy when it was dragged out to be burnt and to feel it had wasted its life.

Another Christmas tree shines in that most popular Andersen story "The Little Match Girl." No one would buy her matches, and she wandered starving in the snowy streets "full of a glorious smell of 10ast goose, because it was New Year's Eve." At last she piteously tried to warm herself by striking some of them, and with each twinkling light came a vision. In the last "she was sitting under a beautiful Christmas tree; it was greater and more ornamental than the one she had seen through the open door at the Thousands of candles rich merchant's. beamed on the branches, and coloured pictures like those in the print shops looked down upon them. The little girl stretched her hands towards them, then the match went out. The Christmas lights mounted higher. She saw them now as stars in the sky; one of them fell down, forming a long line of fire. 'Now someone is dying, thought the little girl, for her old grandmother, the only person who had loved her, had told her that when a star fell down a soul mounted up to God. She rubbed another match against the wall; it became bright again, and in the brightness the old grandmother stood clear and shining, mild and lovely. Grandmother had never been so large or so beautiful. She took the little girl in her arms, and both flew up to brightness and joy above the earth-very, very high, and there was neither cold nor hunger nor care. They were with God."

Surely like Tiny Tim, of the immortal "Christmas Carol," the little Match Girl has softened many a heart and awakened the generosity which alone can fit us to grace Christmas.

It is difficult to discover exactly when Dickens wrote the few perfect pages all smiles and tears he calls "The Christmas His biographers shed no search-Tree." lights. When he wrote "Sketches by Boz," what time "the weather suggested muffins, likewise crumpets, also Sally Lunns," Christmas trees had hardly crossed the cold North Perhaps the inspiration came in Genoa, when he was as homesick as Hans himself, despite the vast cake weighing ninety pounds sent him by the friend afterwards the Baroness Burdett Coutts. sadness is reflected in "The Chimes," which was suggested by the clanging bells of Genoa and is overweighted with serious purpose.

He is, however, at his happiest beside his Christmas tree, where "there was probably a smell of roasted chestnuts and other comfortable things," and he says: "For I do come home at Christmas. We all do, or we all should. We all come home, or should come home, for a short holiday-the longer the better-from the great boarding-school where we are for ever working at our arithmetical slates, to take and give a rest. As for going visiting, where can we not go if we will? Where have we not been when we would starting our fancy from our Christmas tree. . . . Hark, the waits are playing, and they break my childish sleep. What images do I associate with them as I see them set forth on the Christmas tree? Known before all the others, keeping far apart from all the others, they gather round my little bed-an angel speaking to a group of shepherds in a field-some travellers with eyes uplifted following a star-a Baby in a manger. . . . Encircled by the social thoughts of Christmas time, still let the benignant figure of my childhood stand unchanged! In every cheerful image and suggestion that the season brings, may the bright star that rested above the poor roof be the star of all the Christian world. Oh, may I with a grey head turn a child's heart to that figure yet.'

Who in all the world except Dickens could describe the marvels upon the tree as follows? "There were articles in tin, wonderfully made at Wolverhampton, perched among the branches, as if in preparation for some fairy housekeeping. There were jolly, broad-faced little men much more agreeable in appearance than many real men; and no wonder, for their heads took off and showed them to be full of sugar plums. As the child said, 'There was everything and more!' Oh, the wonderful Noah's Ark! It was not found seaworthy when put in the washing-tub. Consider the noble fly a size or two smaller than the elephant. Consider the goose whose feet were so small and whose balance was so indifferent he usually fell forward and destroyed the whole animal creation. Consider Noah and his family like idiotic tobacco stoppers, and how the leopard stuck to warm little fingers. Also 'a plentiful assortment of diminutive O, the warming-pan and a tin utensils.' man-cook in profile who was always going to fry the fish. What noble justice have I done to the Barmecide feasts, wherein the set of wooden platters figured each with its own peculiar delicacy as a ham or turkey glued tight to it, garnished with something

THE CHARM OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE

I recognize as moss. Could all the temperance societies of these later days united give me such a tea-drinking as I had through the means of yonder little set of blue crockery, which really would hold liquid (it ran out of a small wooden cask, I recollect, and tasted of matches, which made tea nectar).

"... Good for Christmas time was the ruddy colour of the cloak in which the tree made a forest of itself for her to trip through with her basket. Little Red Riding Hood . . . She was my first love. I felt if I could have married Little Red Riding Hood I should have known perfect bliss; but it was not to be. There was nothing for it but to look out the wolf in the Noah's Ark there, and put him late in the procession on the table as a degraded monster."

Dickens, like other charming men, soon learned inconstancy, for he remembers "wanting to live for ever in the bright atmosphere I had quitted and doting on the little fairy with a wand like a celestial barber's pole, and pining for fairy immortality with her. Ah, she comes back often. She has never stayed with me."

There is only one woman worthy to be named in the Christmas company of Dickens and Andersen. Mrs. Ewing's books are not read as they ought to be if only for the sake of "The Three Christmas Trees," two of which were dreams. The little lad who was invited to a real one could not go because his friends had sent him to bed with a bad cold by trying to make him into a real snow man, and only succeeding in getting the snow down his back. The originator of this novel idea was very repentant over its results. He brought the snow man his present of a dray, with horses to take out and a dray man wearing ear-rings, who-Dickensian touch-bore a strong family likeness to the angel from the top of the tree who came with him. When the invalid went to sleep he saw a tree far surpassing the tree unseen by him. The angel was like his mother, but when he ran to choose his present he awoke beside the window, only to see the real star above the snow-plumed firs. He lived "a long useful life," and on his death-bed the bright vision came again. "And as the Christmas bells chimed for midnight service the old man gazed in ecstasy, exclaiming, 'Light! The Angel! The Star!' And the distant singing of the waits told how

"The Angel of the Lord came down And glory shone around."

If each one of us gave but a handful of trifles to hang on a Christmas tree this year there would be no pitiful tale that in the poorest places they cannot be decked for lack of fruits. The children need so little to ensure their divine right of happiness. Shall we not respond to the simple plea set



"The old man gazed in ecstasy, exclaiming, Light! The Angel! The Star!"

on a Dutch appeal with a drawing of a ragged child: "Give us our joy!"

They often set the example of beautiful unselfishness Maeterlinck has enshrined in his entrancing "Blue Bird." There the little peasants sang for pleasure because they could catch a distant glimpse of a Christmas tree encircled with merry dancers. They had no envy of the fortunate ones, and could share their imaginary cakes and never begrudge those who had real ones, all plums and white sugar.

Thus does genius link the Christmas tree symbolically with "whatsoever things are lovely." The last word is with Dickens, and it is the fit conclusion of the whole matter: "Now the tree is deco:ated with bright music and song and dance and cheerfulness, and they are welcome Innocent and welcome be they ever held beneath the branches of the Christmas tree which cast no gloomy shadows. But as it sinks into the ground I hear a whisper going through the leaves: 'This in commemoration of the law of love and kindness. This in remembrance of Me.'"



"Twelve attempts did Jed make, and only at the thirteenth did the spike hold and begin to drag the boat with it "—p. 189

Oraun bu Arch Webb

Jed Daggetts Wife Hazel Christie Macdonald

OWARDS morning the wind, which had been shrieking and screaming among the ice-fields the night before, calmed down into an occasional whine; the sun rose on a frozen panorama of glittering ice and stormy sea. Around the base of Little Pierre, the lighthouse, the spray, dashed higher than the rocky foundation, had finally, as though exhausted by its own fury and struggle, submitted to the power of the cold and was now frozen into chill and fearful shapes.

I do not know how to describe adequately this Little Pierre, this tower which rose for some fifty-five feet into the winter sky, and which turned the facets of its huge light out to open sea. The lighthouse had been called "Little Pierre" to distinguish it from its larger companion on shore, "Grand Pierre." And, indeed, the two were as different from

each other as night from day.

Grand Pierre was rather an imposing and ornate affair as lighthouses go, and every inch of its seventy-five feet was dear to the fisherfolk of the small village which it dominated.

In summer its garden was abloom with flowers, and little children frolicked within its shadow. In winter, when storms came down from Labrador and made the villagers glad to sit indoors and put their nets in order, the lighthouse garden was but a pleasant memory and its flowers dead under a blanket of snow. Light shone, though, in the cottages at dusk, and sometimes the occupants could be seen trudging soberly a-down the irregular streets. They were not a people much given to laughter; they had seen too much of life at close quarters, and their hearts had too often been wrung by the sea with which they battled, but they were a simple, kindly, courageous folk, unacquainted with any more frivolous way of spending their brief span of existence. And perhaps the most lovable thing about them was the way in which they each and all built their shacks in the shadow of the lighthouse, as though the towering shaft could protect them through the raging winter.

I have given you a picture of Grand Pierre, but of Little Pierre was none of this true. Four miles of open sea intervened between the two lighthouses, and where Grand Pierre looked down on children playing at Scotch games Little Pierre could see and hear nothing but the surf which flung itself at the tower all day long. Built on a great rock which rose sheer out of the Atlantic, Little Pierre in summer was surrounded on every hand by sapphire, unfathomable depths. In winter it was a creature trying to breast a gale, quivering before each new onslaught of the furious sea, pounded by whole mountains of water which shivered into a thousand tiny cascades at the impact. Towards shore the ice-floes extended for a hundred feet before open water was reached; and far as the eye could reach it encountered only desolation and the havoc of cold and storm.

And yet within Little Pierre there was life. Two people moved within its circular walls, arose, took food, held speech and went about the business of living. And, since you must know it sooner or later, these two-and one other-are the people with whom my story

is concerned.

On the morning of which I speak, when the wind had gone down and a timid sun had begun to climb over the horizon, a woman came into the living-room of Little Pierre and began to go about the preparing of breakfast. A beautiful woman, this Martha Daggett, a woman who had seen between fifty and sixty summers, and whose beauty was the outward manifestation of a lovely and a tranguil mind. Her face was softly tinted, as is an apple; she was a person of irrepressible joyousness, but life had dealt with her sternly, and now her lips rested gravely against one another. She was dressed in an ugly stuff of drab brown, but not even this hideousness of attire could quench her vitality of spirit.

She clasped her hands together and smiled as she caught sight of the sun through the east window, then, at a sound from beyond the threshold, she left off her scrutiny of the outside world and resumed her preparing of the morning meal. Very modest and meagre were these same preparations, and withal full of a certain degree of mystery. First Martha Daggett cut three strips of bacon from a side which was kept in a great covered dish; when she had cut them she stood looking at them, and then, suddenly, she fell on her knees and buried her face in her hands. No, she was not weeping, as you may have thought-she was praying. She seemed almost to be trying to explain something to the Someone Who was not there . . . as if He could not read all that was written in her guileless heart.

When she had arisen she smoothed down the brown stuff of her dress and went for a brief instant to the mirror that hung over the long sink. I said a moment ago that Martha was not crying . . . but this statement was not wholly true. For two tears lay visible on her cheeks as she crossed the room. And lest you accuse her of even the slightest of vanity, I will tell you she used the mirror only to assure herself the tears were not visible. Not for thirty-five years had she lived with a man who believed that all mirrors were snares set for the feet of women-

folk.

When the aroma of the bacon was pleasantly filling the little room, Martha snatched another instant to look from the window . . . this time she looked towards the west, towards shore, four miles away. strained her eyes, but nothing met them save the endless expanse of ice and water, weighted down by a leaden sky giving promise of more snow. Once she saw a faint speck . . . which might be a boat . . . and her breath quickened, but it was only a space of water more dark than the rest-With a sigh of disappointment she went back to the table, which was laid for two, although one person, of robust appetite, could have comfortably demolished the frugal fare set thereon. A large pot of coffee, weak but hot, a plate on which were four cold, beaten biscuits, and a second plate, on which was the bacon I mentioned earlier, completed the array. A scarlet tablecloth made the room look warmer; and in the window a single courageous little plant struggled to draw comfort from the feeble sunshine that came in at the window.

As she lifted the coffee pot to its corner

at the head of the table, Martha heard steps overhead, the steps of a person heavy and deliberate in his walk. She wiped her hands and went to the door that led to the tower stairs.

"I was just a-goin' to call you, pa," she said, and with that, Jed Daggett, her husband, came into the room. A very tall man was Jed Daggett, a man who reminded you somehow of an eagle, so fierce and keen were his eyes. It was these eyes and his tight, grim lips that told you so eloquently what he was . . . a person who would hold to what he believed to be right, even if he had to walk over his dearest to do it. His head was crowned by a magnificent thatch of unruly grey curls. All his life Jed Daggett had been ashamed of these same curls, but not a living soul except Martha had ever guessed it.

Now as he came into the room he nodded to Martha, paying no attention to the unspoken question that lay in her eyes, and going straight to the sink he carefully washed from his hands the grease which his cleaning of the light had left there. Then he sat down in his place, and both he and Martha bowed their heads for the grace that has been said in a thousand New England homes before and since. But now Martha could contain herself no longer.

"What about the boat, pa?" she asked. Jed paused in his slow eating.

"You're just a weak, worrisome female, Martha. How many times have I told you

God is looking out for us . . . ?"

"He may be . . . but I'd be easier in my mind if I could see the revenue cutter aheadin' this way," returned Martha rebelliously. "It's twelve days overdue now . . . and twelve days is a pretty long stretch when you're shut off from everything, same as we are, Jed Daggett!"

Jed looked at her implacably. "Twelve days is nuthin' to God," he replied evenly. "He'll send the boat when He gets good and ready... not a mite before. We ain't put

here to question His workin's."

Martha sighed, then she saw that her husband had raised his eyes to the picture that hung just above her head, the picture of the boy Neill, who had gone down at sea while trying to save his ship. For this son's memory was the altar at which Jed Daggett and his wife worshipped . . . this lad of twenty-five, with the arrogance of youth in his smile, was the thing for which these two old people had come to Little Pierre to lead such a lonely and isolated existence.

After a moment Jed lowered his glance and bent his attention to finishing what was on his plate. At intervals the wind outside threatened to rise again in a tantrum, but always it subsided into a whimper and died down along the water. When the meal was finished Martha cleared away the dishes and piled them in an orderly pyramid at the sink. An indescribable depression seemed to have come upon her... she was like a woman waiting for something... she knew not what. Even the very clock seemed to hush its tick as it waited with her.

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Suddenly she screamed from the window, her voice unspeakably shrill and piercing: "Jed! Jed! There's something been caught on the ice-floes!"

She could hear Jed descending the steps which led up to the light, could hear him pause at the door of the room.

"T'ain't nuthin' but a bit o' wreckage, Martha... nuthin' could 'a' lived through last night's seas..." But he looked obediently through the binoculars which she thrust into his hands. She knew by the instant stiffening of his body that it was no piece of wreckage which he saw.

"It's a dory," he said after a moment. "It's a-poundin' against the ice. . . ." But Martha hardly heard him; she was taking from their places on the wall his oil-skins, the rubbers with metal cleats in their soles, the short wooden staff with the spiked steel end, and the coil of hempen rope. At last Jed was ready, and at the door he turned, forbidding as always.

"Down on your knees and pray!" he commanded, and he banged the door to against the wind which threatened to tear it from its hinges. But Martha, for all she was such an essentially respectful person, didn't see why she could not talk to God and watch Jed at the same time. And she did pray—for certainly during the progress of Jed's terrific struggle towards the open water she sent up a dozen broken pleas that her husband might reach his goal in safety.

For the space of a hundred feet she saw Jed fighting against the wind, then suddenly he disappeared. Martka closed her eyes; he had slipped into one of the open spaces between the floes, and was going down beneath the icy water. But when she opened her eyes again Jed was once more in sight, his body bent to the force of the rising gale. It seemed an eternity before he came to the edge of the floes . . . before he stood within throwing distance of the dory which was

alternately crashed against the ice, and drawn out to sea again.

She saw Jed's arm rise, and something flashed in the sunlight; he was using the spike, tied to the rope, as a harpoon, and had hurled the latter into the dory that its point might catch in the boat's prow. But the attempt must have been a failure, for Martha saw Jed draw the spike back through the water and go through the manœuvre again.

Twelve attempts did Jed make, and only at the thirteenth did the spike hold and begin to drag the boat with it. Inch by inch Jed contested its progress with the raging water; suddenly he stooped, and when he straightened he held the body of a man. Only then did Martha remember that coffee should be boiling against their return to the lighthouse, and that blankets, held to the fire to warm them, should greet this poor derelict's half-frozen body.

Her very feet had wings, yet she was hardly through when she heard Jed shouting from outside. She threw open the door and helped catch the burden he was on the point of letting fall. Together they got the man into the little bedroom, and there Jed stripped the clothes from the bruised body, cutting them where they were frozen most stiff. When Martha saw the stranger's face her initial impression was one of surprisehe was so much younger than she had supposed he would be. Not more than twentyfour or five, as he lay back against the pillows, he looked singularly like a small child, a spoiled child, for not even the sea had been able to strip his face of its sullen-

When Jed forced half a cup of scalding coffee between the pallid lips the boy's eyelids fluttered and he made an effort to speak. But although Martha sat there for the better part of an hour, watching him, the effort was not repeated . . . the boy seemed simply to have fallen asleep.

When Martha had come into the livingroom she found Jed before the picture of Neill, his expression one of ferocious and sardonic triumph. She stood next to him, and he looked down at her for an instant.

"We've snatched another one back from the sea," he said shortly. "I tell you, Martha, it makes a man feel like something to know he's settling an old score with the deep!"

But Martha was not thinking of his words at all. She was wondering if the revenue cutter would get there in time. H

How many times Martha stole in to look at the still figure lying under the blankets I do not know. But each time she found the boy still lost in a sort of exhausted stupor.

At dusk, which in winter falls early on the Maine coast, Jed went upstairs to tend the lamp, and Martha was left with a basket of mending in her lap. For the first time she knew the meaning of complete loneliness. Even Jed, whom she had always regarded with a kind of unquestioning adoration, now seemed to be nothing more than another isolated spirit like herself. They had known marriage and parenthood together, but now, suddenly, there was no common ground of humanity on which they might meet.

In the midst of her reflections she was conscious of a sound . . , from the room where the boy lay. In the dim light Martha saw that he was awake . . . was looking about with inquiring eyes. When he beheld Martha his glance rested on her as though he doubted her being quite alive.

"I hope you are feeling better," said Martha, coming to the side of the bed. The boy continued to regard her woodenly, busy with thoughts of his own.

"What place is this?" he asked abruptly, and after a pause Martha told him.

"Little Pierre!" he exclaimed. "You mean Grand Pierre . . . nothin' could live through at Little Pierre!"

"Your dory caught on the floes . . . and my husband went out and brought you in," said Martha. There was a pause, broken by the entrance of Jed.

"She says this here is Little Pierre," said the boy, indicating Martha. Jed nodded, and the boy went on.

"Was I alone?" And at Jed's second nod he shook his head slowly from side to side. "Two ships gone under in three years... well, the devil sure does look after his own, eh?" He made a grimace. "Heavens! How my eyes ache! And how good are the chances of getting something to eat here?"

Martha glanced at Jed, a lightning-dart of a glance. Then she said, almost apologetically, "I'll get you a bite right now. And I've—I've—got some clothes I expect'll fit you..." She hurried out into the living-room, followed by Jed.

"Pears to me he takes an awful lot for granted," observed the latter as he took the bundle of clothing that had been Neill's and turned to go into the other room,

"So would you take things for granted,

ef your stomack was as empty as nis," Martha felt like retorting, but she didn't. She only busied herself at cutting infinitesimal slices of meat from a fast-diminishing roast. It was pretty slim fare that graced the table when she got through . . . but she thought it would look good to a hungry man. Coffee, two biscuits, and the meat . . . she remembered having read that it was dangerous to give a starving person too much food to begin with.

It was apparent, however, that the boy was actuated by no such delicacy of thought, for he fell on the food as an animal falls on raw meat. For a panic-stricken moment Martha thought he might be going to ask for more, but he didn't. When he had finished he sat back and looked at Jed.

"You ain't teld us your name yet, son," said Jed, as Martha took away the dishes.

"Robert Cartwright," said the boy, shortly. "Shipped on the Nancy E. Smith . . . prettiest six-master ever you laid eyes on . . . she began to founder two days out of New York . . . and when her hatches were stripped off in the storm she just filled up and settled. There were four of us in that dory . . but I guess a swell must have taken the others overboard. . ." He spoke with the matter-of-factness that becomes habitual with those who live by the sea, as though her anger and eccentricities were nothing more or less than the expected.

"My name's Jed," said the older man. "I expect it'll be just as well for us to know one another... there ain't any gettin' away from here till the revenue cutter comes and takes you off... and it's twelve days overdue now."

But what Jed was about to add to his words remained unsaid, for at that instant the boy, springing to his feet, and his face gone savage with anger, said, "Who's that—that man there?"

There was a moment of amazed silence, then Jed, following the direction of the boy's finger, saw he was pointing to Neill's picture above their heads. It was Martha's soft voice that gave the boy the information he wanted.

"That's Neill Daggett, our son," she said, gently and proudly. "He was drowned trying to save his ship."

Cartwright looked at her in astonishment, but there was no mistaking the soft radiance that lighted her face. A little devil of laughter came and danced in his eyes. . . .

The poor fools! Trying to save his ship! The poor old fools; Hugging to their

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"Springing to his feet, and his face gone savage with anger, the boy said, 'Who's that—that man there?'"

Drawn by Arch Webb

hearts these three years the memory of a son whom Cartwright had known to be a drunken weakling . . . a man who, crazed with liquor, had run his ship on a reef and let twenty-eight lads go down to death in a pounding surf! And now Cartwright, the only man living who could tell the story of that awful night, had been saved by the father of the man he hated more than anyone else in the world! For there had been a girl, too . . . a girl whom Cartwright had loved, but Cartwright could have died for all she would have cared; it was Neill Daggett's footsteps that could bring the colour to her cheeks. . . . But now everything was enanged; Cartwright could revenge himself on Neill Daggett more terribly than he had ever dreamed possible!

Frightened by the expression on his face, Martha stepped forward. "Did you know our Neill?" she asked anxiously. "He he—was the youngest captain out of

Boston. . . . "

Cartwright looked at her. "I knew him . . . some," he replied after a moment. "I shipped with him . . . twice. . . ." Then he smiled at Martha who was watching him with her heart in her eyes. "I'll tell you about him some day," he finished.

Yes...he would tell her about him all right! He would say to her: "Your son was not the fine fellow you thought him! He was just a drunken fool that sent twenty-eight fellows better than himself to the bottom of the sea! You've never known the truth, because dead men tell no tales, and because the only living man who could tell the story—me, Bob Cartwright—never knew Neill Daggett had a father and mother to tell it to!"

Oh, he would tell her all right! Neill Daggett was where he could no longer be reached, but here were the two through whom Cartwright would pay off the old

score of three years ago,

Once inside his room the boy broke into laughter... that came to Jed's ears as he was climbing the stairs to keep vigil over the light. He turned back and sought Martha in the living-room.

"He's a bad one," he told her about Cartwright. But Martha shook her head and

went on with what she was doing,

"No . . . he's just been terribly hurt . . . by something . . . sometime," she contradicted, and Jed went out of the room, wondering about the pig-headedness of women-kind.

The next morning the boy ate his break-

fast alone. Martha told him that Jed had already eaten, which was true. And she added after a pause, "I have, too." But this was not! Why she should have bothered to tell him she had eaten, Cartwright couldn't make out. He was busy staring at the fields of ice that hemmed in the lighthouse.

"Heavens!" he said after a minute.
"But the world looks frozen from here...."

Martha smiled.

"It isn't," she contradicted softly. "It's full of people . . . and life . . . and things going on"

Cartwright looked at her with contempt, "Most people are mutts!" he said with conviction. But at this Martha laughed aloud.

"No, they're only trying to get the most out of life . . . and they don't know how, most of them. That's why we should all be patient with one another . . . sometimes a word . . . or a smile . . . it seems to help so much sometimes."

Cartwright considered, then pronounced judgment. "I guess you're just sort of in love with everybody, aren't you?"

But Martha didn't even know the contempt was there. She looked out of the window, and soft colour poured into her face.

"I should like," she said slowly, "to take all the folks that are kinda tired and sick . . . and discouraged . . . and put new hope into their hearts. . . . 1° think that would be a beautiful thing to do."

It was too much for Cartwright. His creed was short and supremely simple. All you had to remember was: hurt the other fellow before he hurts you. Confronted with Martha's strange profession of good-

will, he was almost speechless.

"You're nothin' but a plain daftie!" he said, but he said it under his breath. Then he went upstairs to Jed, who was busy cleaning the lamp. But he found the lighthouse keeper so taciturn that Cartwright was forced to begin the conversation himself.

"Did you ever know Mis' Daggett thought everybody in the world was jus' fine?" he commenced. Jed looked up from his polish-

ing, nodded a slow head.

"Yes... Martha's been talkin' that way for quite a spell now," he said. "She's got an awful lot of love in her heart all right."

"I guess she's a softie!" was Cartwright's

comment. And again Jed nodded.
"Most wimmen are," he replied. "That's
what it means when it says wimmen are the
weak vessels... they're no good unless they

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got some man to stand between them and the world. I don't know where Martha would have been if she hadn't have had someone... cause she's got such notions of right and wrong... she don't seem to make no allowances for justice or punishment in this world! All she thinks about is mercy."

"That mercy's all the bunk!" said Cartwright shortly. "Only silly fools believe in stuff like that!" He felt quite convinced of the truth of the words as he spoke them, and he went downstairs with his resolution strengthened. He was not going to be cheated of his revenge because some old woman believed love was a stronger weapon than force.

The next morning there was no hiding the fact that starvation stared them in the face. Martha, with lips that trembled, reported that they had food enough to last them two days . . . no more. If the cutter didn't get through . . .

"But it will get through," she finished, trying to smile. "God won't let us die like rats in a trap . . . He couldn't."

"God ain't changing His plans to suit the like o' us," said Jed sternly.

Martha did not reply, but she went over and laid a hesitant hand on Cartwright's sleeve. "If it's going to come to this," she whispered, "I'm sorry Jed picked you up off the floes. Freezin's easier than starvin'!"

Jed turned from the window where he had been sweeping the water with his glasses.

"Only a thaw would let her through now," he said evenly. "And there ain't a-goin' to be no thaw . . . not with the thermometer down to five. . . ." He hung the glasses on their accustomed peg, and went out of the room.

By nightfall the gale was upon them, and they knew all the terrors of the condemned. Yet it was Martha who, when Jed had gone to his post in the tower, proposed that she and Cartwright should play what she called 'hikkles," a game played with pegs of wood which Neill had once carved from a maple branch. But Cartwright's thoughts were off on excursions of their own.

"Lumme!" he exclaimed. "I should think you and the old man would go nuts . . . stayin' in a place like this all the time!"

Martha looked up, surprised. "But I thought you loved the sea . . . don't you?"

"Me!" exclaimed Cartwright. "Heavens! I hate it! Dash ol' whinin' thing! Always waitin' to suck poor devils down. . . ."

A curious expression came into Martha's eyes. "Yes," she said slowly, "that's it

... that's what the sea is always doing ... waiting to suck poor devils down. That's why me and Jed have been here all this time, you see. It got our Neill three years ago ... and Jed felt that if ... if ... he could be tendin' a light somewhere it would sorta be keepin' it from gettin' somebody else's boy."

Cartwright turned about and faced her. His eyes were incredulous. "Is that why you . . . and Jed came to live here?" he asked at last.

"Yes," said Martha. "I was a farm girl. I like the earth... and growing things... and the sea only hurts everything it touches. But Jed... he wanted to stay on... and I guess he knows what's best. I don't know where I'd have been if it wan't for Jed... he says I just don't know how to fight life at all.... And he's happy when he thinks he's payin' off old scores with the sea..."

Jed was right, Cartwright thought. Martha didn't know how to fight life at all! This business of loving all the rest of the world . . . where did it get you? Nowhere!

No one slept very much that night at Little Pierre. Awake in his narrow bed, the boy could look out and see the circling ribbon of yellow from the light as it shot through the frozen vapour above the water. Like rats in a trap, Martha had said. That was it . . . like rats in a trap! He wished that Jed Daggett had let him perish in the open boat . . . it would have been all over by now.

For the meals next day, the last they would have, there was hard bread and dripping. Martha put it before them as if she was serving a banquet. There were deep lines beneath her eyes and her colour had paled, but her courage seemed high.

"I have eaten my share," she said in answer to Jed's question, but she did not look at Jed as she said it. Cartwright saw nothing of this . . . he did not care for the dripping, and he was not yet sufficiently hungry to forget the prejudices of childhood. When Martha drew his attention to what he had left on his plate he made a movement of distaste and shook his head.

"It'll do for your breakfast," said Martha, but wistfully. But not even Jed, when the morrow came, could fail to see that Martha looked ill. On the short trip between the stove and the table her steps lagged noticeably, and it seemed an effort for her to pour out the steaming coffee.

"I guess I'm just a little tired," she said, when Jed questioned her sharply, and to

1795

Ied this seemed adequate explanation. He returned to his everlasting polishing of the light, not even his imminent peril being able to disturb the routine he had set himself. Cartwright, about to go up to the tower with him, paused and turned back; he felt a sudden and unaccountable need to talk to Martha

But on the threshold of the living-room he halted . . . for Martha was standing with her eyes on Neill's picture and the plate from which Cartwright had eaten in her hand. After a moment she put the plate down, moved away from it as if torn by inner conflict. Suddenly, and at the sight, Cartwright felt a sort of pain come up into his throat-she fell upon the plate and devoured the scraps of food it contained as only a person can when he is racked by acutest hunger. Cartwright took a step forward, and at sight of him a tide of crimson welled up into Martha's face. She tried to escape, but Cartwright was around the other side of the table in the twinkling of an eye and had her by the wrists.

"Listen!" he said harshly. "Did you go without . . . to give it to him . . . and me?" Martha pushed him away and de-

fended herself sharply.

"It's better that you . . . and Jed . . . should have it," she said stubbornly. "Women don't count so much . . . they don't do big things in the world like men. . . ." And when she finished the sentence Cartwright knew she had beaten him at every point; he could never, now, tell her about Neill.

I can't pretend he wasn't angry with her, too. He resented that she had got through the nice sullen armour he had wrapped about himself, and he was about to give her a fine, round scolding when suddenly they heard Jed running down the steps, shouting unintelligible things as he ran. He burst into the room, shoving the glasses into Cartwright's hands.

"The cutter!" he cried. "She's breaking through!" And it was at that moment that Martha laughed.

An hour later Cartwright, about to return to shore on the cutter, took leave of the two people into whose life he had been flung.

"You have never told me about Neill." said Martha, as she and the boy stood alone for a last moment. Cartwright looked into her eves.

"He was very brave," he said at last, "He went down . . . lashed to his mast!" And to Cartwright's amazement Martha burst

into tears.

"Thank God!" she said softly. "I ain't never told Jed, but there was always a fear . . . here . . . that, when the time came, Neill would be weak. You know, sometimes a mother feels her boy ain't any too strong in the little things. Jed was hard on Neill . . . drove him . . . and Neill was a boy that needed leadin', 'cause he was stubborn like his father. Then when Neill ran away from home I often used to wonder . . . and pray that he would be the man I wanted him to be!" Her voice trailed off, then she came nearer to Cartwright and continued, "And to think that you had to come ... to tell me how good he was!"

Before Cartwright left he gave his promise that he would come back in the summer. For he knew that these two had given him a small share in that niche which Neill alone had possessed before. From the deck of the cutter he watched till the lighthouse was a mere blur against the east sky. Smiling, he thought of Jed-Jed that thought Martha "didn't know how to fight life at all. . ." He wondered if Jed would ever discover that Martha, with her puny weapons, was invincible beyond their understanding. For she had long ago found out that life isn't anything you fight . . . it's something you make! Shaping it in your hands day by day, determining its contours

by what you do and are.

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Cassandra and I

4.-A Word in Place

NCLE ANTHONY frequently describes me as a witless individual married to a silly schoolgirl.

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This is inaccurate. Cassandra is not a schoolgirl; she is twenty-one—and she never was a silly schoolgirl. Had not Cassandra been, on the contrary, a very brilliant schoolgirl, we should have passed out of each other's lives before I could frame my proposal for her hand. This would have entailed no regret on the part of our relatives, who consider that Cassandra and I are a far too mirthful and impecunious conjunction to be endured with any comfort—but it would have been heart-breaking for Cassandra and me.

Four years ago we first saw one another—in a train. It was an extremely full train, I was wedged in the corridor, at the threshold of a compartment in which sat seven seventeen-year-old young ladies in neat blue serge school costumes and a mistress of awesome appearance. I was facing this interior, I wished I was not—at first. But I could not turn.

I felt embarrassed. If the mistress glanced at me I did not mind very much. If one of the young ladies glanced I gazed hastily past her at the speeding landscape, outside the far window. It was very interesting landscape, but I would have an idea that my cheeks were getting red and that my eyes were assuming a strained, unnatural appearance whilst they gazed. two young ladies glanced, I gazed doubly hard at the landscape, and felt that my eyes were stretching grotesquely and that my face was carmine. And I longed for the moment when I should reach my station and escape.

And then Cassandra—though I did not know that was her name—glanced. I did not gaze at the landscape; I did not remember that I was embarrassed; I gazed—completely enraptured—at Cassandra.

Cassandra glanced away, then glanced again. I had not ceased gazing; I did not cease. Cassandra glanced at five-second intervals.

I wanted to propose. Cassandra knew. The situation was almost an impossible one for proposing in. This again Cassandra knew.

And at the very next station Cassandra might get out—or I might get out. And never in our lives should we meet again! Cassandra and I realized all this; we thought desperately. We did not know what to do.

Then Cassandra, removing her eyes from mine for a moment, and looking, in her desperate striving with the problem, towards



"We first saw one another in a train"

the window, drew a breath of intense relief
—and exclaimed delightedly to a schoolfellow:

"There's a church!"

"I've seen a church before," said the school-fellow.

Cassandra was not discouraged by this unkindness. "In the holidays," she said, with clear enunciation, "we always go to St. Mark's, North Audley Street."

A month later I went to St. Mark's, North Audley Street.

Cassandra and I, discovering ourselves side by side on leaving, felt exactly as though we had been introduced on the train iourney: and Cassandra introduced me to her father and mother.

"I did not quite catch your name," said Cassandra's father to me presently. I was not surprised.

5.—A Pharmaceutist in Need

ASSANDRA and I had run out of tea. It was eleven p.m. when we made the discovery. We were sure that we should not sleep a wink throughout the night unless we had our accustomed pot of tea. It was a dismal, weary prospect. Besides, our nostrils were simply straining for that fragrance which arises when boiling water is poured upon crisp tea leaves; our palates were simply yearning for copious currents of hot, fresh tea.

We put on our coats and went forth into the cold moonlight-and on into the town. We trusted to see illumined windows above some grocer's shop. We should not hesitate to pound at the grocer's premises and to beseech him for tea. Of course it would be against the law purchasing tea at midnight nearly, but we could not resist breaking just

a little bit of the law-if there should be a chance.

The town seemed completely asleep. There were no illumined windows. Cassandra's shoes and mine tapped reverberatingly on the pavement of the long, empty main street. We felt miserable. We had not the courage to rouse a grocer from happy sleep for an illegal packet of tea.

And then we came to a dark shop, inscribed "Ernest Erskine, Pharmaceutist and

Chemist."

"Chemists sell tea-special kinds, for invalids-awfully nice," breathed Cassandra. "You ring their night bells-for medicines."

We stopped. We scanned, in the mingled moonlight and street-lamp light, a brass plate, above an electric bell-knob, on the shop doorpost. On the plate was, "Night Bell. In Cases of Urgency, Ring.

We were not acquainted with Mr. Einest Erskine. We studied his name. It seemed a sharp-tempered name. It suggested, somehow, waxed-spiked moustache and lean, keen, irascible visage. And Mr. Erskine was in bed.

"We could ask for a medicine, and bring the tea in as an afterthought," whispered Cassandra. "We daren't ask just for tea. A cheap medicine. We can't spare more than sixpence for it. Ring."

I rang. The bell made a startlingly authoritative clangour in the remoteness above the shop. I felt that we had wounded Mr. Erskine's dignity to begin with,

"Think of a medicine!" whispered Cassandra.

"Then double it," I said, vaguely reminded of some game.

"Oh-h, think! He will be here in a minute!" entreated Cassandra.

It is not easy to think, in circumstances of haste, of a sixpenny medicine. I rubbed my temple. Cassandra bit her lip. For seconds we could not think of anything.

"Something for a headache?" I said. "Might be more than sixpence. Quick, I can hear him!"

I thought. I could hear Mr. Erskine. I was beginning to feel frightened. The shop,



"A bolt was withdrawn: the door opened, and Mr. Erskine was revealed

behind its blinds, suddenly became illuminated.

"Sticking-plaster!" I whispered.

"Yes!" whispered Cassandra.

A bolt was withdrawn. The door opened, and Mr. Erskine was revealed as a dear, dressing-gowned old gentleman with floating grey curls and sweeping beard, whom no one would have the heart to deceive.

Cassandra smiled her sweetest, most

pathetic smile.

"Please, it is dreadful of us to disturb

you," she said. "But we haven't a pinch of tea, and we're dying for some. Could

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"Certainly! Certainly!" said Mr. Erskine. "I don't stock it myself; but my wife will oblige you with a packet. Pleasure! Step inside,"

6.—A Tone in Contrast

ASSANDRA and I collect cigarette cards. The collection is Cassandra's really. Three thousand, one hundred, and thirty-nine vivid-hued little pictures of cricketers, aeroplanes, polar bears, and Canadian harvest fields were a cherished part of her worldly goods when she married me; and we lose no

opportunity of increasing this delightful art

gallery.

This afternoon we were in an omnibus. We were not thinking of cigarette pictures at first. We were thinking that we hoped it would not rain. We were expending eighteenpence of the housekeeping money upon a ride into the country, and meant to walk back.

We were the sole patrons of the vehicle for some time. Then an elderly man, of rugged visage but prosperous appearance, climbed in. He purchased—in a rugged voice—a ticket for Paddock Chase, two miles beyond our own destination. Then he drew from his pockets a silver cigarettecase and a long, white cardboard box with a blue-green label.

Cassandra and I stiffened abruptly at the

sight of the box. In fact, we went rigid. We knew that it contained not only a hundred cigarettes, but one or even two of those beautiful extra-large pictures which rarely come our way, because we find it more financially convenient to buy my cigarettes in small packets.

Our fellow-traveller opened his cigarette-

case.

"No smoking inside!" said the conductor, in the doorway, with severity, looking towards our friend opposite.



"Our hearts went cold. The conductor was gazing at the pictures—hungrily"—p. 198

"No one ain't a-going to smoke," said our fellow-voyageur tartly.

"All right!" said the conductor,

"All right yourself!" retorted our rugged friend,

He scowled at the conductor, who looked ignoringly away. He scowled at me. He grunted. Then he opened his cardboard box. With something of contempt he threw two large pictures on to the seat beside him—and began to fill his cigarette-case.

They were perfectly entrancing pictures, of a series which we had never seen—turreted castles, one grey, one faintly rose-coloured, rising against faint blue skies. Cassandra and I held our breaths. We wanted the pictures indescribably. It seemed obvious that our friend did not want them. Yet we did not like to ask him for

them. We both felt that his reply might be quite disconcertingly rugged. And he would not get out and leave them behind until he reached Paddock Chase!

We gazed at them, and yearned, and con-

tinued to lack courage.

We neared our destination. Cassandra touched my hand meaningly. I felt in my pockets. She passed me her purse. I went to the door and took tickets for Paddock Chase.

We gazed again, thinking longingly of the moment when our friend would rise to his feet and abandon his pictures. And then some instinct prompted us to look towards the doorway. Our hearts went cold. The conductor was gazing at the pictures hungrily. He was a collector! He wanted to ask for them, but the absence of cordial relations between himself and our friend was deterring him.

He glanced at our friend, who, with uncommunicative mien, was now reading a newspaper. He had a mental struggle. His lips wavered, tightened, wavered.

Cassandra and I, watching stark-eyed,

shivered with anxiety.

At last, whistling to cheer himself, the conductor decided also to wait until Paddock Chase.

Cassandra's tremulous hand took mine.

We were wondering what the conductor would say when I sprang upon the pictures before he could.

The conductor picked up an inscribed board to insert in a bracket upstairs. With a lingering look at the pictures, he went upstairs.

Just then we passed two red-brick houses. They marked the commencement of straggling Paddock Chase. The actual village was half a mile farther on. I contemplated our friend.

Perhaps he was a stranger to the neighbourhood?

If so, perhaps this was precisely the part of Paddock Chase which be required! The conductor's tone to him had been regretably harsh. A courteous tone from me, conveying timely information, would come as a very pleasant contrast.

"This is Paddock Chase, sir," I said.
Our friend grunted, arose, tugged the bellcord, and made for the door. Cassandra
and I thought that we would get out, too.
I put the pictures into my pocket, and we
all alighted.

The omnibus started off. The conductor came rapidly downstairs and looked inside. Our friend looked about him. Cassandra and I looked at a little by-path, and hastened into it.



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Things that Matter by Rev. ARTHUR PRINGLE

THE LARGER CHRIST

"HRISTMAS comes but once a year"; and so, of course, from one point of view it must be. Even when tension is happy, it cannot be kept up indefinitely; and, in the nature of the case, the zest and festivity of the season would soon pale if they were more than annual. And, taking the more serious side of Christmas, with all its religious associations and implications, the same thing applies. Once a year certain truths are remembered and emphasized, including the greatest truth of all; and, here again, the very rarity of the occasion means an intensity and impressiveness otherwise impossible.

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Agreed, then, that in this sense we cannot always be at the Christmas level. If we had to leave it at that, it would still be more than worth while. When the world is at its darkest, it is good to see a light in the sky, even if it goes almost as quickly as it comes; and, if only for a few days, it is good for men of all sorts and conditions to warm themselves at the fire of charity and goodwill.

The Essence of Christmas

But need that be all? Is it satisfying enough as it stands? What I have said, so far, applies to the accessories and observances of Christmas but what of its essence? Especially as things are going now, it is natural to think wistfully of what might happen if all the year round men saw each other in the genial atmosphere of Christmas, and if the mood of its generous philanthropy perpetually governed their dealings. Is there any teason why this should be regarded as impossible? If 50 much of the Christ-spirit can be in the world for a few days, why not for weeks or months or the whole year? Are we content to relegate our religion, at its central point, to a brief truce, with little permanent effect on the world's social and individual warfare?

Such questions as these may or may not

have a familiar sound. That depends on the standpoint of the reader. In any case, they raise an important issue to which present-day exponents of religion will have increasingly to address themselves. For the fact, as I see it, is that the Christ-festival is too restricted and seasonal because our conception of Christ is too small and limited. Before we can get the larger Christmas we must rediscover the larger Christ presented in the New Testament, but so unaccountably lost sight of.

Not Big Enough?

It is this larger Christ that, whether they know it or not, men are asking for to-day. With some it is a deliberate contention that Christ, as usually understood, is not big enough or real enough for to-day's They picture Him as an aloof needs. figure in Galilee-far away in more senses than one-living so long ago and under such different conditions from our own, that He cannot possibly be in touch with us. Others, who have not thought the matter out, have a vague sense that the ordinary way of talking about Christ is, somehow, not immediate or adaptable enough to grip them with satisfying reality.

This attitude is prevalent enough, and, on the surface, reasonable enough to form part of the task to which the modern restatement of religion has to address itself. And, as I have already suggested, the material lies ready to hand in the New Testament, whose conception of Christ is far larger than the conventional and orthodox. It takes three forms, of which the most important and fundamental is where it speaks of Jesus as "the Christ"—so much, indeed, the Christ, that He is called Christ purely and simply.

Put as plainly as may be in everyday language, what do we understand by this? "Christ" stands for the "anointed" one, sent forth by God to be the saviour of men. And the Christian faith is that Jesus was this,

uniquely and supremely—the Christ in a sense that separates Him from all others. His life and teaching, His sinlessness and amazing claims, the influence He has confessedly had on the world's history, are the data which make His unassailable title to be called the Christ.

And that is what we mean by the Incarnation. Leaving to professed theologians abstruse questions as to what is technically meant by the "deity" or "divinity" of Jesus, we take our stand on plain facts, and are content to feel that Jesus reveals God to us, and enables us to know and to love God, as no one else has ever done. Whatever God is or is not, and whatever the infinite reaches of His being, something tells us that He must be like Jesus; and that in the earthly life of Jesus we see to a unique extent the character of God.

He Stands Alone

This can be put in different ways, but in essence it represents what may be called the accepted Christian position. And it is not superfluous to say-what is the plain factthat the freest legitimate criticism of the Gospels has but served to bring into relief the strength of this position. It is the simple truth that, after these records have been scrutinized and dissected in every conceivable way, Jesus, from any ordinary point of view, stands alone and unaccountable among men. In his latest book, Mr. G. K. Chesterton drives this home with characteristic "bite" and vigour when he says: "No modern critic in his five wits thinks that the preacher of the Sermon on the Mount was a horrible, half-witted imbecile that might be scrawling stars on the walls of a cell. No atheist or blasphemer believes that the author of the parable of the Prodigal Son was a monster with one mad idea like a Cyclops with one eye. Upon any possible historical criticism he must be put higher in the scale of human beings than that. Yet, by all analogy, we have really to put him there or else in the highest place of all."

This, of course, is a rude and hectic manner of presenting a dilemma that has aiways—and quite legitimately—been part of the staple of the Christian argument. Mr. Chestecton's method is apologetics with the gloves off; and, disconcerting as it may be to some people, this sort of argumentative lightning has its purpose to serve with certain minds to whom the lamps of conventional statement reveal nothing.

But, having gone so far, we must go farther. Granted that Jesus was, in a unique sense, the incarnation and revelation of God, we ought to make it clear that this does not preclude or deny other manifestations of the divine. According to the New Testament, there is a larger "Christ" that includes everything that makes men feel God's nearness and gives them the help they need at any particular time. We can call it mystical interpretation or allegorizing, or what we will; but there is something in us that leaps to Paul's comment on the story of the rock from which the Israelites drank in the thirst and weariness of the wilderness: "That rock was Christ." It was God coming to those people in the way in which they then needed Him most. When men are dying of thirst, water is the Christ-the expression of God-that they crave, more than any supernatural signs or wonders or blinding glory.

Paul having given us this clue, why should we be afraid to follow it up? It is one of the very things we want to make our religion more satisfying and practical. It means that the same divine love that found its supreme expression in the historical Jesus is continually expressing itself to us in the scenes and happenings of everyday life. "Christ" is not a term of one place or period or method; it has as many forms as there are varieties of human need. To the tired it means rest; to the sinful, forgiveness; to the suffering, healing and comfort; to the unemployed, work; to starved instincts, beauty in sound or colour or human affection.

Christ in Us

We are laying hold of the profoundest meaning of the Christian faith when we realize that the divine love that "emptied itself" so as to take human form, is always still further emptying itself in order to become anything and everything by which men's wants are fulfilled and their lives brought into closer touch with God. If we take this seriously-and, again, why not?it must make a tremendous difference to our whole way of looking at things. Ordinary scenes and experiences will gain a new significance, and, in a very real sense, earth will be "crammed with heaven." Best of all, the sense of far away-ness and out of touch-ness that too often spoils our thought of Christ will vanish, and He will become more than ever the redeemer of our lives from drabness and futility and loneliness.

This carries us a long way in the direction of a broad and satisfying faith, but there is yet another most important step waiting to be taken before we can enter into the fullness of the New Testament conception of Christ. And here, once more, Paul is our great stimulus. Pervading his teaching, especially in its later stages, is the idea of the Christ that is living in himself. "It pleased God to reveal His son in me." "For me to live is Christ." And, applying the same truth to other people, he suggests that Christ is "being formed" in them.

Out of Reach?

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Now what are we, as practical twentiethcentury men and women, going to do with such utterances as these? The usual thing, I suppose, is to regard them as quite outside the world in which most of us live, and as having nothing in common with ordinary human experience. But that, of course, is precisely the sort of thing that makes religion unreal.

Looking at it from the point of view of what we know of ourselves and each other, is it, after all, so very much out of our reach? Paul, of course, was one of the supreme masters in spiritual experience, with a mystical temperament and an adventurous mind that carried the Christian faith into great reaches of hitherto unexplored territory. Nevertheless, he was human—very human, according to his own showing; and, if we have the courage of our faith, much of his experience can also be ours.

The fact is, we ordinary people must learn not to be afraid of big texts and impressive records of spiritual experience. If we come right up to them, look into them and handle them-reverently yet naturally -we shall soon begin to realize that there is something in our own experience that responds to them. And the big discovery waiting to be made by all of us is that the Christ is in us in a sense perfectly intelligible and real. In our finer moments, when what we feel to be our better self is uppermost, we actually find ourselves secing the world and our fellow men as. Christ would see them; instead of harbouring the usual selfish motives and ambitions, we, at least for the time being, share the spirit of Christ and honestly desire to do His will. At such times there is no affectation in saying that for us to live is Christ.

This, of course, is but another way of declaring that we all have it in us to be

parts of the Incarnation, in the sense that in every man there is something of God waiting to reveal itself. Whether it does reveal itself must depend on ourselves. Selfishness, in all its many forms, will hide it and perhaps destroy it; unselfishness, the service of our fellows in the spirit of Jesus, will strengthen it and bring it to light. There is the matter in a nutshell. But what an inspiration, if we care to reach out to it and make the most of it!

In these things there is nothing like being personal and definite if there is to be any practical result; and there is brave stimulus in W. T. Stead's suggestion that we should achieve more for the world if each of us strove to be a Christ rather than a Christian. It is more than a distinction without a difference. "Christian" can so easily leave us nebulous, conventional, ineffective. But to call yourself a "Christ" means a tightening of resolve, a toning up of life, and a sense of vocation that makes everything different.

It is a wonderful truth, making the Christ more full of reality, and giving to every human life a meaning that nothing else could. The religious thought of our time must find room for it, and encourage people everywhere to bring home to themselves the fine saying of Origen: "On account of Him there have come to be many Christs in the world—even all who like Him loved righteousness and hated iniquity."

The Quotation

Every smile, every kind action, every kind thought, seen or felt in those about us, those with whom we live, those we only fass or see, is, simply, the Christ who is in them appearing in them. . . . It means that Christ is in each one of us; and that by looking for and calling up the Christ in our every neighbour, and by so doing enlarging the Christ in ourselves, it is in the power of each one of us to raise Christ from the dead again.—A. S. M. HUTCHINSON in "One Increasing Purpose."

THE PRAYER

OUR FATHER, who has implanted in each one of us something of Thyself, give us at this season such sacred memories and true desires, that the Christ in us may become more strong and manifest. So, whenever life becomes difficult, may the spirit of Christmas be an unfailing light that brings us reassurance and encouragement.

"That Schoolgirl Complexion

A Talk on the Beauty of Health BuDr. C. W. Saleeby, F.R.S.E.

LL beauty comes from beautiful blood and a beautiful brain." "Beauty is only skin deep." Which of these assertions is the truth-that of the poet or the proverb? Walt Whitman was right, and the proper comment on the proverb is that once made by Herbert Spencer, "The saying that beauty is only skin-deep is only a skin-deep saying." We all love beauty. "Beauty draws us by a single hair," as our own poet wrote. My argument here is that beauty is the sign, the outward expression, the flower of health, and that the way to beauty is through health, all other means being delusive. Even for the foolish who believe that beauty is only skin-deep there can be but brief success for means of beauty, such as cosmetics, which are not even skindeep. I proclaim the gospel of health not only for personal happiness and usefulness, and for national efficiency, but also for all who love beauty in themselves and others,

To this true beauty there is no royal roadno more, as Euclid remarked to his princely pupil, than there is to mathematics; but if we will live according to the laws of life we shall find health, and beauty will be added to us; just as happiness is given less to those who seek it directly than to those

who look for higher things first.

A Beautiful Skin

There are degraded tastes which find beauty, or, at least, attraction and interest, in disease of various kinds. People of that hapless kind do not read THE QUIVER and I do not write for them. Natural and healthy-minded people-the vast majority, or how could any nation endure?-feel and call beautiful that which is healthy. By beauty they mean nothing else; and no clever counterfeit can fool them-not though it be painted "an inch thick," as Hamlet

Let us begin with the skin by all means, and meet the challenge of artifice and de-



cadence. When a girl puts red lead, or whatever the muck is, upon her lips, she pays perverted homage to the beauty of health. She wishes her lips to look like those which are lit and tinted from within with the rich, red blood of health. Anamia is disease, and she hates the appearance of it. She will be well advised to learn the deep and simple laws of bloodmaking, which will teach her that rich, red blood, and the lovely colour it gives to lips and cheeks, are the product of simple food, a clean food-canal, and sunlight, the "Queen of Colours," as St. Augustine called it. She will learn also that easy, graceful energetic movement-which is a very precious kind of beauty-springs largely from rich, red blood, and that is only one of a hundred ways in which the reality serves beauty, whilst the chemical mess on the lips avails only where it is-and only for perverted tastes even there. Just so, in the sphere of the mind, do tastes differ; and it was a very exalted and noble temper which led Huxley to call rhetoric "the pestilent cosmetic with which men varnish the fair face of truth."

"Skin Foods"

We read of skin foods, and many years ago I wrote that "there is no such thing as a skin food, though there are many excellent furniture-polishes, and the skin depends for all its life and health and beauty upon the blood and nerves within." To-day I would add that sunlight has been shown to be a true food absorbed by the blood through the skin, and that, in the process, it also feeds and tints the skin directly. There is no other skin food. But this produces a type of complexion (if the other factors of skin-health be attended to) which can stand scrutiny by the sunlight which made it.

I am not here concerned with mere indoor beauty, which serves in salons at night under carefully devised artificial illumination, but looks ghastly by daylight next morning. That kind of "beauty," waxen-skinned and indolent, may have served in the past generation, when women were regarded as indoor objects, and had little freedom but to die, none saying them nay, of consumption; but in these days the beauty which does not avail on the tennis-court or the river or the shore serves not even the humblest functions of beauty for its possessor.

Soap-or Bran?

"That schoolgirl complexion" is a beauty which women are admonished, upon the hoardings, to keep. An innocent and effective soap is certainly a means to that end, but I was very pleased, when turning over the leaves of a popular American weekly, in an hotel in Rheims the other day, to find a full-page advertisement which goes not only deeper than any cosmetic, but even deeper than any soap. The argument was that in order to have a lovely complexion one must be sure to avoid any poisoning of the skin from the food canal. Such poisoning robs the blood of the lovely colour with which it tints the skin, and also produces muddy tone and blotches and even pimples and worse, in the unfortunate and innocent skin-"more sinned against than sinning." Therefore, according to this advertiser, we should add a certain kind of bran to our diet in order to keep the food canal clean and clear. Whether to that essential end you use bran of that or another brand, or fruit, or exercise, or wholemeal bread, I care not; but I rejoice to see that popular advertisers are teaching their readers the laws of true cosmetics at last, with more probable success than has attended my efforts during these many years-for reiteration is the secret of successful teaching, and advertisers may repeat themselves, but writers must not, unless they be very clever indeed!

So much for the skin, though indeed there is much more to say, but we must proceed. When we consider beauty of form we must

learn that it is largely a matter of balance and proportion, and that these, which the sculptor can chisel out of shapeless marble, are, in the living creature, the results of balanced growth-otherwise unattainable. Therefore the health of childhood is the first condition of adult beauty. Most of the ugliness we see around us, probably to a greater extent than in any past age, is due to early malnutrition and disordered, disproportionate, perverted growth or stunting, due to wrong feeding and lack of sunlight in our urban childhood. If not too late, transference to a school in the sun creates not only the inward health but also outward beauty. Health of a kind may thus be restored in the adult, but never the beauty of balanced growth.

Iodine

I must not here return to my old-new theme of sunlight, which I have now placed upon every lip, but the iodine theme, already considered here, must be named. A beautiful neck is a precious possession. The contour of a healthy neck is beautiful. It must not be too thin or too fat; and the thyroid gland, just under and on either side of the voice box, must be neither too large nor too small, and then it will contribute exactly to the beauty of the contour. too-full neck, induced by goitre, appealed to certain decadent schools of painting in the past; though not even they could admire the hideous scars of the surgical operations which these unfortunate persons may have to undergo at a later date. Let us hasten to follow the example of many other nations, as I have urged now for eighteen months, almost in vain, and restore iodine, in the tiny quantities which suffice, to our children's diet; and we shall see no more goitres, nor scars, outside the dreadful medical atlases, where are recorded the awful hideousness of leprosy and many other diseases which have destroyed beauty in the past.

The contour of the trunk is a factor of beauty—or should be. A past generation sought to counterfeit it by the use of whale-bone corsets and similar abominations. They have gone, as I believe, never to return. They may have improved form, but by interference with movement they robbed the wearers of the rare beauty of easy and graceful motion. And they had grave dangers of their own, about which it is happily no longer necessary to write. Dangers of that kind are not involved in the modern

successors of those horrible cages in which women imprisoned and tortured themselves. But no one can have witnessed the development of the beautiful torso, admirable in repose or in movement, as we see it in children at Leysin-or now, shall we say, at the Bruce-Porter Home of Dr. Barnardo's at Folkestone-without learning the truth of Dr. Rollier's praises of "le corset musculaire," the firm, supple muscles, in due proportion evolved in sunlight and air, as against any mechanical contraption from without that ever was or will be invented. Strange comment on our modern civilization that the most beautiful bodies, in colour and form and movement, to be seen anywhere nowadays are those of former invalids at Leysin or other places where the dayspring from on high, the source of all life and beauty, is now valued at long last.

Space does not avail for my plan, which was, before finishing this article, to traverse the body from top to toe and note the illustrations which it affords. We can do so for ourselves. The healthy scalp is hairy; no one admires baldness. The short-sighted or otherwise misshapen eye causes its owner to frown and pucker bis face, and lose beauty. Adenoids lead to mouth breathing and swelling of the nose, and rob a child of the beauty of facial form and the beauty of bright intelligence. Alcohol causes "redness of eyes," a permanent flush of the skin, so different from the lovely, fleeting, vital changes of colour which depend on soft arteries and pure blood; and the wise are not deceived, nor persons of taste pleased, with the hectic flush, the unnatural glitter, or even the "good spirits" which alcohol induces, for they know that this kind of beauty is false, not health but poisoning and disease, and that it is on the way to ugliness next morning and permanent loss of all beauty in time.

The Mouth

The mouth is all-important. Its beauty largely depends on healthy growth and maintenance of the jaws and teeth. We can do great service to our children accordingly. But we must learn the laws. The nose and throat must be kept clear, so that my rule may be observed, "Your mouth should be shut unless you have something to say or to swallow—and very often then." The food must exercise the jaws and teeth in order to avoid the so-called "porridge-mouth," fit only to suck and not to bite or chew. That

detestable and dirty discomforter which, in our folly, we call a baby's "comforter"—or, in the United States, a "pacifier"—must be abandoned if we have started a baby with it. We must endure the screams until they cease, being found futile, and then the battle is won, once and for all, and the little mouth will be saved from that which, in my view, is responsible, more than anything else, for the ugly mouths with which our land is filled.

Rickets is a leading enemy of the beauty which depends upon a healthy skeleton, Past rickets is now revealed, only too often. in the form of limbs exposed by the modern feminine fashion which enlightened hygienists have persistently applauded and which received the high sanction of the Dean of St. Paul's when he recently presided at the first annual dinner of the Sunlight League. But my readers know well that there should never be another case of rickets in this or any other country, and future generations will never see the knock knees. bow legs, pigeon chests, square heads, and stunted trunks for which that type of what I call the "diseases of darkness"

Real Beauty

The words healthy and holy have a common origin and cognate meaning. My theme is the beauty of health, but many centuries ago an inspired writer taught us the beauty of holiness. I have seen it for myself in faces now gone, of which I revere the memory, and I am astonished to look at twenty-fiveyear-old photographs of the most beautiful face I know and to observe how much more beautiful than ever in its radiant youth it is now, after a quarter of a century of "work and play and love and worship" have left upon it the marks of the things the soul lives by. There is a beauty which transcends the power of physical health and disease; it is the beauty of holiness, shines forth the clearer into extreme old age, and may be radiant in the calm face of the dead who have long lived the holy life.

But indeed my poet, already quoted, has said this, in the preface to his "Leaves of Grass," when he promises the beautiful results of right living: "Your very flesh shall be a great poem, and have the richest fluency, not only in its words, but in the silent lines of its lips and face, and between the lashes of your eyes, and in every motion and joint of your body."

The Spirit of Christmas

MISS CLEMENCE DANE, the celebrated author, in her article in this issue suggests that somehow we moderns have lost the true spirit of Christmas, and that even the snow does not fall at Christmas time.

It is very difficult to know what to say to this; yet there is one thing that can be said, and should be said at once. If we have lost the spirit of Christmas, we should lose no time in seeking to regain it.

What, after all, is the intention of Christmas? Surely it is not the feasting or the merry-making. Christmas should stand, first of all, for goodwill and for giving. Naturally enough we shall think of those near and dear to us. Christmas presents will disorganize the postal service for weeks before Christmas, and the shops will do the best trade of the whole year selling fancy nicknacks and oddments which may, or may not, be of use to their recipients.

But is this all that the spirit of Christmas means—the real spirit of Christmas giving? Surely we ought not just to confine our thoughts to those who are closely associated with us. We ought not to stop short even at the servants and the man who sweeps the crossing out-ide our door. Christmas giving should go farther than that, and perhaps, then, in Christmas charity we shall be able to retain or restore the true joy and gladness of the Christmas heart.

A Happy Problem

Many times during the past years I have put the Christmas appeal before my readers, and right nobly have they responded. I feel that there are so many good causes that bespeak our attention now, that it is embarrassing to choose between them. We live in a world of prosperity and distress. The shops are crowded with good things, and the number of unemployed is fearfully high. How best can we distribute the little that we may have to give? It is indeed a problem, and yet it is a very happy problem to those with large hearts.

I want to make one or two suggestions.

Recipes for a Gladsome Season By the Editor

Sixty Years of Wonderful Work

In the first place, may I appeal once more for Dr. Barnardo's Homes? Next year the Homes are celebrating their 60th anniversary, and it is wonderful to go back over the sixty years and see what Dr. Barnardo's has meant to the nation and to destitute childhood. During the whole period of their existence the motto of the Homes has been: "No destitute child refused admission." Think what that means. There are many institutions to which a child can be admitted by votes or influence, but wherever there is a destitute case the name of Dr. Barnardo's rises in one's thoughts, and it is wonderful knowledge that as long as a child is destitute, there is no other question-Dr. Barnardo's will take him or

There are now 7,300 children in Dr. Barnardo's family. The biggest family in the world. The mere food bill is enormous. Imagine having to support the whole of a town like Cromer. Yet the population of Dr. Barnardo's is far larger than a typical seaside town, and these children are all dependent upon the gifts of Christian folk.

Will you send me something for Dr. Barnardo's Homes? I shall be delighted to forward all your gifts.

The Centre of Want

London is the centre of the Empire, and the centre of want. There is one Society which has always made a strong appeal to QUIVER readers, that is the Shaftesbury Society, known for so many years as the Ragged School Union. It is the helper of London's poorest children. It has centres in the most poverty-stricken districts, and it brings a ray of light where light is most needed. Anything you can spare for the Shaftesbury Society will be well employed.

The Incurables

Old age always makes its appeal to the true heart, but I think there is one even stronger appeal, and that is the case of the incurables. The very word has a dread significance. There are so many old people,



Training boys for the Navy at Dr. Barnardo's Homes

and some of them not so old, who are dying—not necessarily dying in beds of pain, but suffering from a disease known to be incurable. Is it not a Christlike work to make the passing of such as easy and happy as possible? The Home for Incurables, Streatham, London, S.W.16, does all it can to ease the suffering and provide the needs of those who are incurable. For years past my readers have helped this Home, and I feel sure this Christmastime they will not be behind.

The St. John's Hospital

Some months ago I wrote of a visit I paid to St. John's Hospital for Diseases of the Skin, at Leicester Square. I am very glad to say that as a result of my mention of the matter in The QUIVER, many readers have sent contributions.

I can at once touch your sympathies and your purse by mentioning the blind, the crippled, the incurable; but it needs a little more imagination to realize the plight of people suffering with hideous and deforming diseases of the skin. Particularly painful and trying it is when children are attacked, and I should like to feel that some of my readers this Christmastime have the joy of relieving the sufferings of children who have been stricken with diseases of the skin. May I ask for the help of my readers for the St. John's Hospital? Just now funds are badly

needed, and I should like to feel that this wonderful institution will be enabled to start the New Year with solid financial backing sufficient to do away with the anxiety that lack of money always causes.

Little Folks who Need Help

I am particularly interested in the Queen's Hospital for Children owing to the fact that as Editor of LITTLE FOLKS I am a member of the Little Folks Home committee, which is associated with the Queen's Hospital. I think that perhaps my readers do not realize the wonderful work which children are doing in connexion with the Little Folks Home.

LITTLE FOLKS has a smaller circulation than that of THE QUIVER, yet the readers of that magazine raise no less than £1,000 a year for the support of the Little Folks Home. These young readers do their best, which is not sufficient to keep the Home going. Perhaps some readers of THE QUIVER can kindly send a donation for the Little Folks Home.

Miss Souter, in the New Army of Helpers, has mentioned a number of individual cases. I feel I dare not add to the number of appeals beyond what I have already mentioned. But, in wishing all my readers a very hanpy Christmas, I do venture to express the hope that it will be a giving Christmas, and that joy and Christ heart may be with you all.

A Royal Pilgrim of Love

Prince of Wales in Quest of a Bride By Arthur Page

THE person and doings of an heir to the throne, especially when he hap-pens to be young, handsome, and unmarried, have always possessed a peculiar fascination for the public. Even the most perfect matinée idol cannot compete with Prince Charming in the favour of the ladies,

young and old, of his country.

Our own Prince of Wales has familiarized his countrymen with the spectacle of a prince on his travels. Three hundred years ago another Prince of Wales, not unequal in looks and charm to his royal descendant of to-day, set out on a foreign tour with the romantic object of wooing

and bringing home a bride.

Had there existed in the Stuart period those amenities of modern life-the flapper, the picture postcard and the "pictures," Prince Charles would undoubtedly have been the object of as fervent adoration as has fallen to the present heir to the throne. In any case, the hearts of the feminine subjects of King James I must have beat quicker when their eves lighted upon this personable young man of twentythree, with flowing, dark brown locks, fine eyes, delicate profile, and splendid dress; and not a few must have envied the royal lady upon whom he threw his perfumed handkerchief.

When, therefore, it was whispered about that one keen sunny morning in February, 1623, Prince Charming and his best friend had stolen away in disguise to cross the Continent of Europe under the assumed names of John and Thomas Smith in quest of a Spanish princess, one would imagine that the romantic enterprise would have been followed by the man and woman in the street not only with breathless interest, but with hearty prayers for its success.

Unfortunately, in this imperfect world, the heart of a royal prince is not allowed free play. Politics and religion thrust themselves in, and romance is hustled into the remotest corner. The dashing adventure of "Baby Charles" and "Steenie," so far from increasing the popularity of the handsome Prince, awoke most serious misgivings in the breasts of his subjects. The popular pastime in Elizabethan days of "singeing the Spaniard's beard" had still too strong a hold upon popular favour. and the memories of the abominable cruelties of the Spanish Inquisition toward British seamen were as yet too vivid to allow Prince Charles's subjects to view with complacency the prospect of a Papist Princess of Wales, and a Spanish one to

And this is where the villain of the piece comes in. He was a pleasant enough villain to look at : none of your heavy-browed. black-avised, sneering fellows; but a gay, rotund little man, who concealed the wily brain of the intriguer under a cheery bonhomie and a flow of witty conversation. In spite of Inquisition and Armada memories, Gondomar, the Spanish Ambassador, had won popularity by his affable manner, and by his taking habic of waving to the ladies in the windows as he drove in his richly decorated coach to the Court of St.

James I had been playing some time with the idea of marrying his son Charles to the Infanta Maria, the sixteen-year-old sister of Philip V of Spain. The religious objections were obvious, the advantages less on the surface. But James believed that if the match were brought of, the Spanish King would restore the Palatinate to James's son-in-law, the Elector Frederick. So the canny Scots Monarch wavered to and fro, advancing only to retreat. Clearly, if the matter was ever to come to anything, an issue must be forced.

So it was in the intriguing brain of the gay little Ambassador, and not in the romantic breast of the handsome young Prince of Wales, that the madcap exploit of an incognito trip to Spain was conceived. To pass the idea on to George Villiers, Marquis of Buckingham, and the Prince's intimate companion, in such a fashion as to suggest that Buckingham was its veritable parent, was child's play to the wily Gondomar. Ambition, love of adventure, and a certain element of theatricality, made

Buckingham fruitful soil for such sowing; and what his favourite desired was law to the Prince.

Thus it fell out that, after a couple of "scenes" between King James and his "sweet Babes," consent was reluctantly wrung from the "dear dad," and on that February morning three hundred years ago the two adventurers left the King's hunting lodge at Royston and rode to Buckingham's home, New Hall, to take farewell of his wife, Kate Villiers, and begin their momentous journey.

Next day we are to behold the precious pair riding gaily away, their chins hidden in false beards, their rich dress exchanged for the sober garb of the plain tourists,

Thomas and John Smith.

Farce dogged their footsteps from the start. At Gravesend, where they had to cross the river, Buckingham could find no smaller change to reward the ferryman than a gold piece worth twenty-two shillings; and the fellow, thinking from the size of his payment that the travellers were about to fight a duel, brought the local authorities like a swarm of bees about their ears. No sooner was this difficulty surmounted, than they almost ran into a carriage containing a Spanish envoy escorted by two gentlemen of the Court, and to avoid recognition were forced to put their hacks to a stone wall.

At Canterbury, an officious mayor ran them in, on the ground that orders had come from London to prevent their leaving the country. A little bluff soon opened the way of escape, and at length Dover was reached. Here their company was enlarged by the addition of two gentlemen sent by the King to beep watch over them—one of them being the handsome poet-courtier, Endymion Porter. Their servants also arrived with the equipment necessary for the journey.

Human obstacles successfully overcome, our travellers were confronted with that cheerless prospect which waits for all folk, gentle and peasant alike, who would cross the Straits of Dover. A fresh gale and a choppy Channel took full toll of "Baby Charles" and "Steenie," and prolonged the agonies of seasickness for a solid nine hours. One may conjecture that for this dreary period, at least, the Prince's romance was changed to realism, and his mind began to entertain misgivings about the wisdom of his quest.

Rest and refreshment at Boulogne, how-

ever, rapidly restored the spirits of these pilgrims of love, and they reached Paris in high good humour with themselves and their task. Still retaining their plebeian names, they assumed raiment more in keeping with the position of English courtiers. In spite of their beards, their disguise was quickly penetrated, and a young woman who had been employed as a milliner in London, meeting our fine gentlemen in the street, cried out: "Certainly this is the Prince of Wales." Anyway, the news soon reached the ears of the English Ambassador and the French authorities, and steps were quietly taken to assure to the royal wanderer and his companions a safe conduct through the pleasant land of France. Before they quitted Paris, it is worthy of note that, at a masked ball in the palace, Charles set eyes for the first time on the sylph-like figure and dainty complexion of the Princess Henrietta Maria, who, and not the Spanish Infanta of his quest, was destined to become the future Queen of England.

Without turning aside on the way, the Prince and Buckingham and their companions rode steadily into the warm sunshine and blossoming landscape of the South. Their incognito was respected, but many were aware that a member of the English royal family was "on the road," and a stream of hurrying officials and messengers from King James raised the dust of the great highways. Among them was the Earl of Carlisle, dispatched by the anxious sovereign to keep a guardian eye over his "sweet babes."

The "sweet babes" behaved themselves in sober fashion, however, as men conscious of a weighty errand. The only diversion occurred near Bayonne, where, finding no meat at their inn, they rode into a herd of goats, and to the accompaniment of roars of laughter, the gay marquis and his servants chased and cornered a kid, whilst the Prince, remaining on horseback, waited his opportunity to dispatch it with a pistol shot.

Madrid, city of brilliant flowers, tinkling guitars, swaggering toreadors, and mantilla-clad beauties, was entered on March 7-Leaving their companions half a day's journey from the city, Charles and Buckingham came to the city on a pouring wet evening—perhaps a warning of the fiasco that was to attend their expedition. As Thomas Smith, the marquis knocked at the door of the residence of the English Ambassador, whilst Charles, a disconsolate

A ROYAL PILGRIM OF LOVE



"The Prince caught his first glimpse of the fair lady whose hand he had journeyed so far to win"

Drawn by John Cameron

figure under his soaking riding cloak, sheltered in a doorway, awaiting the upshot of his companion's mission. Buckingham's reception from the Ambassador was as frigid as the atmosphere, for the Earl of Bristol realized only too plainly the diplomatic complications and difficulties which must inevitably follow the unexpected and unwelcome irruption of the hot-headed and atrogant favourite.

The next day, bringing back sunshine and warmth, put a brighter aspect on the situation. The King of Spain and a high official of the Court paid an informal visit to the Prince's lodgings, and gave him a sportsman's bluff greeting. Philip IV was a devotee of sport first and a monarch afterwards, and the flavour of adventure in the royal suitor's trip was calculated to

touch a responsive chord in a sportsman's heart.

Later on, now magnificently arrayed in the dress suitable to their station, "Baby Charles" and "Steenie" drove to the Prado, where all fashionable Madrid was wont to sun itself on fine spring afternoons. There the Prince caught his first glimpse of the fair lady whose hand he had journeved so far to win. The Infanta Maria, a pink and white slip of sixteen, pretty but timid, was seated in a State coach of overwhelming dimensions and grandeur. The deep flush which overspread the Infanta's pretty cheek as she acknowledged the Prince of Wales's salute was interpreted by Charles's friends as an indication of the warmth of her interest. It would have been more correct to ascribe it to shyness and

fright. For as English mothers of the day hushed obstreperous children to silence with threats of the "bloody Dons," the Spanish Princess had been brought up to look upon a Protestant as a devastating monster, the enemy of God and man, outside the pale of human goodwill. At the first hint that she might become the bride of the heir to a Protestant throne, the poor Princess grew hysterical with terror. To a mind trained as hers had been, the prospect was scarcely to be distinguished from that of contracting a matrimonial alliance with the Prince of Darkness himself. She could only be consoled by the promise that her suitor would certainly embrace the Catholic faith before marriage.

The Prince's personal efforts to win his lady's affections were attended with singular ill-luck. Hearing that it was the fair lady's custom to walk of a morning in the delightful garden of the Casa de Campo, outside the city, Charles and Buckingham betook themselves there with the intention of securing a tête-à-lête with the Infanta

under favourable conditions.

Unfortunately, on arrival, the gallants found that the garden contained no Princess, and that a high wall divided them from the orchard where she was walking with her attendants. Nothing daunted, "Baby Charles" got a leg up from his faithful "Steenie," and leaped lightly down the other side. But, instead of being duly impressed by the gallantry of her handsome lover, the Infanta broke all the traditions of the fairy tale by screaming at the apparition and flying to her attendants. All efforts to win a word with her were repulsed, and Prince Charming was obliged to make an ignominious withdrawal, though, fortunately for his dignity, a way out was found by a door.

Meanwhile, the two handsome adventurers had become for the moment the idols of Madrid. They were fêted by King and nobles, and acclaimed by the man in the street, who made the lanes echo with a song celebrating Charles's romantic quest, composed by the poet-laureate of the Spanish Court, Lope de Vega. Bucking-ham vied with his royal companion in the richness of his attire. Diamonds were sewn loosely all over his garments, and when they dropped off at a State ball and were returned to him, the Englishman, with a magnificent gesture, swept the proffered stones away.

But this popular favour rapidly faded. Olivares, the chief Minister of State, emphasized the necessity of Charles's "conversion" as a preliminary to the marriage, and carefully avoided any mention of the return of the Palatinate to James's son-in-law.

Buckingham's magnificence swelled to arrogance, especially when he received an intimation that the "dear dad" had made him a duke. A religious conference, at which four learned and eloquent friars e-sayed to preach and argue Charles into the true faith—it must have been something like Sydney Smith's nightmare of being preached to death by wild curates—broke up in confusion when Buckingham interrupted the flow of eloquence by jumping up from his chair, throwing down his plumed hat, and stamping on it in rage

and contempt.

Some private affrays of a religious origin between the Prince's followers and the Spaniards further increased the tension, and, at last, their royal host was driven to intimate to his guests that they had outstayed their welcome. Negotiations dragged on for another month or two, attempts were made to patch up differences. But it was plain that the alliance was doomed, and at the first faint indications of the coming of autumn, the Prince and the Duke packed their rich garments, shook the plentiful dust of Madrid from their feet, and went aboard the British fleet, which had been cruising for some weeks off the coast of the Peninsula.

On October 15, 1623, the Prince and his companions landed in Portsmouth in a very different spirit from that in which they had embarked seven months ago

on this "great lark."

Discomfited and chagrined at the unexpected fiasco of his romance, Prince Charles derived some consolation from the cordial reception which met him everywhere, and which the successful accomplishment of his trip would certainly have cooled. Everywhere crowds hailed him with "God bless our Prince of Wales," and gleeful shouts followed the royal horseman of "No Papist Princess for Old England" from the throats of worthy citizens, who little guessed that within twenty months' time this same Prince would take to wife a French Princess as firmly established in Popery as any Infanta of Spain.

Christmas and the Child Mind

MURIEL WRINCH

VERY parent interested in the development of the child mind will enjoy a remarkable little book that was published about a year ago, "The Child's House," by Marjory McMurchy.

It purports to be "the Comedy of Vanessa from the Age of Eight or Thereabouts until she had Climbed the Steps as far as Thirteen," but it is much more than that. It describes the thoughts and feelings of a child with faithfulness and charm, and invokes memories of what we ourselves felt at that age.

The First Christmas

I mention the book in this article because in the chapter "The Impossible Christmas" the author sums up so vividly the feelings of a child approaching the first Christmas she has consciously known. "Vanessa had been told that she had already experienced several Christmases; but as far as she was concerned this was a mistake. She might have taken part in celebrating Christmas as an unconscious member of her family, but she had not been aware of it. . . . What was Christmas that would enable her to . . . fall into raptures over it? . . . She had explored the mind of everyone she knew to see if they thought it wonderful; and they all did. Priscilla, Maud, Hector, Rafe, her mother, her father even, Jane Sors, who did the family washing, Martha, who had been in the kitchen ever since Vanessa could remember, they all said that Christmas was Christmas, simply the biggest thing that Vanessa could imagine. . . . So Vanessa braced herself for Christmas. She clung to it tooth and nail lest any shred of Christmas should escape her. . . . The vague, intangible blessing that there was in Christmas trembled and grew vast before Vanessa's

eyes. Her mind was always on tiptoe after it. Every little prayer, little repentance and little joy that Vanessa had ever known gathered themselves into Christmas, and drew her, fascinated, after them." Few of us will remember, as clearly as Miss McMurchy evidently does, the feelings with which we approached our first conscious Christmas. But all of us—even so hardened a one as old Scrooge—feel its atmosphere, the sense of anticipation and bustle and stir that surround it, and we can imagine how this must affect the small child.

Vanessa naturally tried to get more definite details about Christmas, "these white,

shining, beautiful far - away towers on the very edge of December." She asked her elder sisters about it. They told her

"There will be mysterious doings of which father and mother must know nothing"

about the presents—presents for mummy and daddy, presents for all the children and their friends. Vanessa felt a slight sense of disappointment. She felt quite sure, somehow, that "Christmas wasn't candy; not picture-books, not a skipping-rope, not a toy trumpet, nor a toy cart." Still it was all she had to go on. She supposed that Christmas must just mean presents. One would be sure to be happy if one had presents. So Vanessa decided on a doll.

Now comes the tragedy of the story. Vanessa had her doll-a beautiful doll. But it did not bring her the happiness she expected. "She took the doll in her hands, held it up before her, and looked straight into its eyes. The doll looked back. Vanessa shook her head a little. Then she laid the doll in her arms and rocked it gently for a while as she knew mothers did with their babies. Where was the glory? Something inadequate and wooden about the doll smote her like a blow. Was this Christmas? This! The pressure of the hard body against her living bosom struck to her very heart. Had she made a mistake after all?"

Hopes and Expectations

Poor little Vanessa! She experienced at that moment a disappointment that probably hundreds of children experience every year. During the weeks before Christmas they have been entertaining hopes and expectations of something wonderful and quite different from anything else—they would call it spiritual if they knew the word. Then, when the great day comes, they are given

presents—Christmas
Day seems merely a
glorified birthday
party without the
sanction of anyone
having a birthday.
If we wish to celebrate Christmas in
such a way that the

"The pressure of the hard body against her living bosom struck to her very heart"

child is fully satisfied, we must first answer the question that he is asking: "What is Christmas that should make it so different from all other days, that for hundreds and hundreds of years it has been kept as a great festival, the greatest of the year?"

We may go back to early history and find that Christmas was kept thousands of years ago as a religious celebration of the winter solstice, a festival in honour of the return of the sun—but this answer does not give the reason why we celebrate Christmas.

Again, in Christian households, the answer may be that Christmas is the anniversary of the birth of Christ-but even this is not sufficient. We have not discovered the whole secret of Christmas, for Christmas is kent both by Jews and Gentiles, by atheists and agnostics as well as Christians. "No man has the excuse for not eating his Christmas dinner like a Christian," says Israel Zangwill. "Jewish circles have adopted it so fanatically that the little Jewish girl could ask compassionately, 'Mother, have the Christians also a Christmas?" From the icy north to the equator, from Australia to Patagonia, Christmas is held sacred. Nations who have taken nothing else from our civilization celebrate the festival. There must, indeed, be some charm about Christmas-a charm that no one can resist. And unless we catch and hold this spirit of the festival we cannot give our children, in its fullest sense, a real jolly, merry Christmas.

Presents

Christmas owes its success the world over to the fact that it is a "season of peace and good will." We celebrate the birthday of the Babe born in a manger nineteen hundred years ago by going out of our way to show love and good feeling to others. The custom of giving presents to friends and relatives arose from the general desire to give others pleasure at Christmas-time-disappointment is inevitable both for grown-ups and for children if the presents and parties remain and that which once inspired them is fled. Giving as well as receiving is an essential part of Christmas joy, for at this season of the year everyone-children included-must work to make everyone else

There are ever so many things that children can do—and what joy there will be in the doing! There will be whisperings in the corners and mysterious doings of which father and mother must know nothing-

CHRISTMAS AND THE CHILD MIND

There will be weeks of furious activity before Christmas with the handwork box in the nursery. Sometimes mother will be called in to advise about the present being made for father; sometimes there will be anxious shrieks when she comes near, for fear that she should see something not intended for

her eyes till Christmas morning. Even small children can make little pre-sents for their friends-a bracelet of beads for mother, a stamp-tray or pipe-tray from a box-lid for father, a match-box toy for a baby sister, and so onwhile the older children can make raffia baskets or do pieces of embroidery or fretwork as presents for their friends. Then, too, there are poorer children to remember at Christmas-timetoys which the child has outgrown can be mended up and packed in boxes made gay with scraps. I think we should be very

careful that our children only give away toys that are really of use and in attractive condition. Sometimes a child is allowed to think that any old toy is good enough for those less fortunate, and thus gains at the beginning of life a false idea of what constitutes charity.

There are decorations to be made as well as presents—nuts to be gilded and ornaments cut out of blue, gold, red and silver and green paper to make the Christmas tree gay. It is fun to make "sweet-chains," wrapping each sweet in a gay paper and stitching a sweet on thread at regular intervals. The children can help in cutting out biscuits in dough in the shape of stars, halfmoons, manikins and diamonds, and can decorate them, before they go down in trays to the oven to be baked, with hundreds and thousands, stoned raisins, sweets and comfits and almonds.

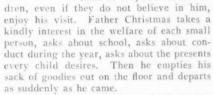
Christmas Carols

There are Christmas carols reflecting the very spirit of Christmas, which children will love to learn that they may sing them on Christmas Eve to mother and father, uncles and aunts. An inexpensive collection is published by Novello, and Christmas songs, amongst others, are to be found in that charming song-book, "In Songland with Children," compiled by Carey Bonner.

There are also many attractive Christmas plays in which even tiny children can take part. Good plays are published for a few pence each by Steads, famous for their "Books for the Bairns," and by Wells, Gardner, Darton.

Use could be made of many Christmas cus-

toms to be found on the Continent. In Holland and Germany, Santa Claus pays a visit just before supper one evening, about four weeks before Christmas Day. In he comes with his long white beard glistening with hoar frost, his fur cap and red coat touched with snow, his sack full of apples, nuts and sweets. Sometimes he bears a small Christmas tree, bright with tinsel, and then the small children have no doubt at all that he really is the authentic S. Nicholas. Even seven- or eight-year-olds are not quite sure if Santa Claus is a fable or not, and older chil-



The visit of Santa Claus stimulates any spirits that might be inclined to lag, and preparations for the great day go on apace. The atmosphere is charged with surprises and secrets. There is the turkey to be bought and the Christmas shopping to do. Every now and then little toys appear on the tea-table, or perhaps a dish of manikin cakes or a tiny figure of Santa Claus on each plate. These little treats all show the child that his mother and father are doing their part in promoting Christmas cheer by planning to make their children happy.

It is well if the mother can devote some extra time to her children round the Christmas season. A story-circle should certainly be one of the events in the day's programme. There are so many stories to tell. Preeminent, of course, is the story of the Nativity. Children never tire of hearing the stories of the journey of Mary and Joseph, of the shepherds and the wise men, most of all of the tiny Baby in his rough



"The children can decorate the house with holly, ivy and mistletoe"

cradle. It is wonderful to them to feel that the birth of the Babe still makes the world so glad, although it happened hundreds of years ago. Myths and legends also have their place-the charming Eskimo myth of "How the Robin Got His Red Breast" and the story of "Why the Evergreen Trees Never Lose Their Leaves" (both found in Florence Holbrook's "Nature Myths," published Harrap) never fail to attract. There is Grimm's "The Fir Tree" also, and many stories of winter-time and Christmas are to be found in Emilie Poulsson's "In the Child's World," a book recommended in the article on "Your Children's Literature." In a book called "For the Children's Hour," by Carolyn Bailey and Clara Lewis (published by Geo. Philip), there are ten Christmas stories and six stories of winter, all of which children will enjoy.

Christmas Eve

When Christmas Eve comes there will be great bustle and excitement in many a household. There is the Christmas tree to be dressed, and while the grown-ups are closeted with the tree the children can decorate the rest of the house with holly and ivy and mistletoe. Then the boys and girls may be called in, and there will be a time of revelry. Children love to dance round the tree with its gay, lighted candles, its sparkling tinsel, its nuts and apples and oranges. Christmas hymns and carols can be sung as they dance. There is one charming story, too, which is especially suitable to tell round the Christmas tree. It is called "The Golden Cobwebs," and is to be found in Cara Cone Bryant's "Stories to Tell Children."

On the continent a Christmas tree service for the children is often held on Christmas Eve, and they receive their presents in church. In England this is never done, but there is certainly no reason why some small Christmas service should not take place in the schoolroom or nursery. Presents could be given either on Christmas Eve or in the morning itself.

It makes a very great difference to a child how a present is given. Understanding parents will wrap it up in a great deal of paper and string—it is so thrilling to open a parcel. It is fascinating, indeed, to watch a small person's face when he is thus employed—the look of anticipation, the

shade of momentary misgiving lest the present may, after all, turn out to be a disappointment, the look of joy when at last the gift is revealed.

It is very important to give a child the right present. We do not show our love for him, as we should do through our presents, if we merely buy something advertised as suitable for a child of that particular age. We must study the child's tastes and then we shall buy him a gift that he can feel was meant especially for him. If he receives something he does not want, not only does he feel disappointed, he feels—consciously or unconsciously—that we have failed to take trouble to please him.

What Children Want

All children require certain elementary qualities in their toys. The first qualification of a good toy is that they must be able to do something with it. If it is a doll, clothes should be made to take on and off, and it is a good plan to give with it some pieces of material out of which more dresses or underclothes can be made. Toys must be strong-bitter tears often fall on Christmas Day because the carelessly glued leg of a piece of furniture has come off or the wheel of a cart has suddenly become loose. Toys must, as far as possible, give opportunities for creative work. Children of five and six love the occupational toys to be found in kindergarten shops because they can manufacture something from them; "Meccano" and "Chemical Magic" sets are popular with older children for the same reason.

Christmas Day and Boxing Day pass all too quickly. The children gradually begin to settle down. Another slight excitement comes when the Christmas tree is taken down on New Year's Eve. The remaining apples and sweets and biscuits are shared out, there are some games, singing and dancing to celebrate the close of the Christmas season.

But though Christmas is over its effects will linger through the year. Children who have experienced Christmas in the full sense will have learned something of the joy of giving happiness to others. When they are "old and full of years" and review their lives again some of their most vivid and happy memories will be of Christmas at home.

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SUNSHINE-AND CHRISTMAS

Christmas Abroad?

HAVE rather a guilty feeling about Christmas. Some years ago, as perhaps older readers may remember, I timidly ventured on the suggestion that Christmas away from home had its possibilities and good points. I hinted that there were, after all, drawbacks about bringing an assortment of unwilling relatives under one roof once a year to eat more than was good for them and get on one another's nerves—just because it was Christmas. Of course, I hardly believed that people would take the matter seriously: it does well, sometimes, to assail the unassailable. I knew that people would smile and sighand do just the same as before, because it was Christmas, and Christmas must be celebrated just in one sort of a way, though the years come and go.



"Yes-but Where?"

To my surprise, I have found of late that mine was not a mere voice crying in the wilderness. People don't look startled now when I cautiously hint at Christmas away from home. All they say is, "Yes, but where?" In another few years I shall be advising people to stop at home for a change

In the meantime, "Yes, but where?" is the problem of many folk. You see, there are a great many people to-day to whom "the good old-fashioned Christmas" is a dream of a good old-fashionable age. Where there are no children, where there are no relatives who are real friends as well, where the few days at Christmas mean an opportunity for a real rest and holiday, it is but natural that the increased

facilities for Christmassing away from home should make people strike out for a change.

My Christmas Number, as you see it before you, was practically finished: the printers were waiting for these few pages, "Between Ourselves," and someone asked me the old, old question as to what should be done at Christmas. "Torquay" was the answer I gave on the spur of the moment. I really hadn't thought about the matter overmuch, but it seemed to me that if ever there was an ideal spot for a winter holiday, Torquay must be it, so I suggested Torquay for the Christmas festival.

A Perilous Thought

Now, to think about Torquay is a perilous business. Think about Christmas and you start buying leather purses and teacosies and toys; think about Torquay and you suddenly discover that you are tired and in need of a change—and you begin to look up the time-table and make calculations, and whilst agreeing that the thing is impossible, you find out what the fare is and whether Aunt Jane can mind the children for a few days if you have to leave home, and so on.

That's what happened in my case: I discovered I was tired and cross, and that Mrs. Editor was tired and needed a change. Winter was upon us: a fog pall hung over the landscape at home, and London was a city of gloom. The long winter months were before us: the winter months of colds and 'flu, fires and fog and general desolation. In a weak moment I promised Mrs. Editor I would take her to Torquay for a few days. The next day I regretted

it, and the day after I regretted it still more: the glass was steadily falling, and the papers assured me that rain was bound to fall, and that the cold was settling in in dead earnest.

A Seat and a Book

We decided not to motor: we had had some experience of fog, and-well, you know the road to Exeter. Besides, the train does the journey so absurdly easily and quickly: the time-table assured us of that; all you had to do was to get to Paddington at twelve noon. That meant that I could go to the office as usual, reply to letters, pass proofs, and take the tube to Paddington. Mrs. Editor could deliver final words to Aunt Jane, bid another farewell to the children-and meet me at the station.

All of which happened according to programme. For the rest of the journeywell, there simply isn't anything to talk about. You find a comfortable seat and a book, and before you are half through chapter one you are called into the luncheon car. You have a nice, unhurried meal, then you go back to your compartment, and mean to read chapter two; but, instead, you have a nap-and then you find you are at Torquay!

We left our luggage at the station. We had nowhere to go. But, then, we never have. We are like that. We like to be free till the last moment, and then to pick and choose on the spot. (Of course, it has its disadvantages: have we not on occasion sought high and low before the fourteenth place has rescued us from a miser-

able predicament?)

The Plan of Campaign

We took the tram down to the town, and then, like experienced warriors, we surveyed the scene and laid our plan of campaign. I looked for the strategic spot : it must be on high ground, yet convenient and accessible; it must have the sea view, yet be quiet and secluded. We pondered, gazed, and strolled. Yes; the ideal spot was just away up there-over the harbour, facing south and west, with a glorious panorama of sea and hill, standing high vet shielded from the north and east, secluded, yet a minute from the town and trams, That was indeed the spot-and, to be sure, there was the house. I sent Mrs. Editor to reconnoitre; in five minutes she came back with a glowing report. She declared we couldn't find anything better if we searched the whole town, and, although it is against all principles to accept the first offer, we promptly went and booked unand had no cause for regret! (Probably dozens of other places would have suited us just as well: some towns are like that: each hotel you alight on you declare is the one and only. And some other towns 1 could name, you can't find a satisfactory port of call, though you try dozens in turn We had somehow managed to secure a room on the front: one of those spacious rooms that only the good days could produce; a room looking out on the sea and the hills. One could stay in bed and watch the fishing fleet maneuvring, or the little distant trams toying along the front to Paignton, and the still smaller trains slowly wending their way miles off -to Brixham. The only trouble about that room was that you didn't want to leave it. (Some people, I understand, only summon up enough energy to get down to meals; then they sit on the veranda all day and see everything without further effort.)

90 "Snow in Westmorland"

The next day opened dull. The newspapers said that it had been raining in London, and that snow had fallen in Westmorland. However, I put on my overcoat, took my umbrella, and descended on the town. Mrs. Editor could not resist the temptation to go and look at the shops. I discovered the Publicity Office of the town, and went in to ask a few questions. They are wonderfully hospitable people at Torquay. They will answer all questions, find you an hotel or boarding house-or do anything else short of paying your fare home! When I mentioned THE QUIVER, they insisted that really I must be introduced to the Mayor, and although I modestly tried to decline the flattering offer, an appointment was promptly made!

A Problem of Clothes

By this time the weather had brightened: it was getting really warm. The sky had cleared, and presently I was delighted by that wonderful blue-Mediterranean bluethat I always associate with Torquay. How they manage it I do not know; they told me at the office that it usually rains at night at Torquay, leaving the fine weather for the day! Anyhow, I went back to the hotel and took off my overcoat. Then I sallied forth to meet Mrs. Editor, who was full of the wonderful costumes and beautiful creations to be obtained in the lovely shops!

It was warm. I remembered that, for contingencies, I had brought a flannel suit with me, so I went back to charge. This is why I went to meet the Mayor in flannels—whilst snow was falling in Westmorland!

The Mayor I found to be an old North Country man: he had come from Birmingham some forty years ago—and since then his countrymen seem to have been following him year by year.

Capturing the Men of the North

There is no doubt but that Torquay has been discovered and captured these last few years by the natives of the hardy North, I don't wonder. Think what it means to be able to escape the rigours of the winter and to bask, in the cold months, in the sunshine of that lovely Torbay! And, too, the curious thing, as I can vouch for myself, is that, though Torquay gets the sun, it isn't relaxing. Living as I do on the bracing North Downs, I cannot exist in a relaxing climate. But I have never found Torquay other than bracing, although I have visited the place in the summer in the midst of a heat-wave, and again in the autumn when London has been saturated with humidity. The Mayor told me that of late years the train service for the North has considerably improved; fast trains make the journey from Birmingham and the more northern centres in very quick time, without change of carriage. The journey from London, as I have said, is a very simple matter.

I asked about Christmas, and was told that undoubtedly the place would be full for the Christmas week—as full as at Eastertime. All the leading hotels and boarding houses make their own arrangements to entertain their guests, and, in addition, the outside attractions will be at their best. The moral seems to be that if you want to spend Christmas at Torquay, you must book at once!

00

A Char-a-banc Indeed!

In the afternoon Mrs. Editor suggested a char-à-banc ride. Now, I hadn't been on

a char-à-banc for years. I pointed out that it was winter; that, although for the moment the sun was hot, it would be very cold driving home in the dark—and snow was falling in Westmorland!

Anyhow, we went—up and up the hills to Hay Tor, fourteen hundred feet above sea level—and so on to Widecombe-in-the-Moors. The sky was cloudless, the sun sinking into the west throwing a glorious light on the falling leaves and the great bare Downs. We had tea—with Devonshire cream—at Widecombe, and the drive back was a sheer delight—and it wasn't cold.

The next day was hot and cloudless; we walked to Babbacombe, took snap-shots of the sea and coast, visited as many of the entertainments as we could crowd in, and enjoyed ourselves thoroughly. Incidentally, I inspected the local meteorological records. The previous day I found registered a temperature of 65 maximum and 53 minimum—and snow had been falling in Westmorland!

About Time We Returned

It was about that time that Mrs. Editor informed me that she would not mind spending the winter in Torquay! She is rather particular in the matter of climate. but she declared that she found the air just suited her! I immediately decided it was about time we went home, so the next day we boarded the twelve o'clock Torbay Limited. London, we found, was wet and foggy; we toiled up the hill to our home on the Downs in torrents of rain. That was four days ago, and it has been raining ever since. It is also dark, foggy, and altogether miserable. I have had my snapshots developed, but nobody will believe they were taken now; one and all declare they are summer pictures!

Wouldn't it be a good idea to move the whole office down to Torquay? I feel sure the rents would be cheaper and the work better. But, there, perhaps everybody would be going out on strike. The weather would be too good!

Meantime, I wish my readers one and all, at home or abroad, by the fireside or at the sea, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The Editor

Problem Pages

The Marriage Maze

VERY many of the readers who write to me about the problems of marriage make the fatal mistake of believing that on the relationship of men and women the point of view of both sexes is the same

Education, with all its enormous advantages, has not yet succeeded in teaching men and women that there are fundamental psychological differences between the sexes, which must be met bravely and clearly if

unhappiness is to be prevented.

For instance, "Moira," a young woman living in a London suburb, writes to me an almost tragic letter—so tragic, indeed, that it might be the work of some unloved, uncared-for woman. Yet this very letter tells of the chivalry and the kindness and the reliability and loyalty of the man for whom she cares:

"I am unhappy," she says, "because my love for this man seems to be such a little incident in his life. He is never enthusiastic. He spends the greater part of his spare time with me, and I think I am the only woman for whom he has ever cared. But his love for me does not seem to fill his life as my love for him fills mine."

There, in a few words, if my correspondent only realized it, is expessed one of those fundamental differences to which I have just alluded. Love plays a very big part in the lives of many men, thank God; but I doubt if the emotions associated with love matter so much to a man as to a woman. For countless years men have been creatures of action, and it is natural to them to express their love for women in practical ways. For countless years women, with their greater leisure, their greater imagination, and wider artistic perceptions have experienced more keenly than men the delights of love. Women, as a rule, have powers of expressiveness that men do not possess; but this does not mean that their love is deeper or more sincere than the love of a man. Nor does it mean that because

The Marriage Maze—Trying to Look Young—Too Many Novels By Barbara Dane

she thinks more about her love, because it colours the whole of her life to a wider extent than in the case of a man, that love really means more to her than to her husband or her lover.

I think that women who have great powers of loving, and who are highly susceptible to all influences of sentiment, need to walk delicately through life. Pure love can only be an ennobling influence; but the love that seeks constant reassurances, constant satisfactions, that is continually analysed and discussed often wearies a man. Was it not Byron who said that love itself must rest?

Those who love most happily are tranquil and content; they accept joyfully and thankfully the love that is given to them without wishing to examine too closely its quality. We all love in different ways, and I think nothing so soon destroys the happiness of marriage as the demand on the part of the wife, or the husband, not that love should be returned, but that in its return the very quality of its giving, the very manner of its giving should be imitated by the marriage partner.

I think that in love, as in spiritual matters, we have to become very much like little children, who love freely and happily, who trust, who take it for granted that they are loved, but who do not suffer torments because the way in which they are loved differs from their own way of loving.

Many of my correspondents write to me much as "Moira" has written, and I hope these words of reflection, the result of much thinking and of a very considerable experience, will be taken by these perplexed readers as an attempted solution of their own problems.

Keep Out of London!

I know my advice must seem ungracious, and loving and knowing London as I do, it does not please me to advise anyone who wishes to get to know the great heart of the world to remain in the provinces. But, when a girl without friends or relatives in London suggests that she should give up a



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P.335

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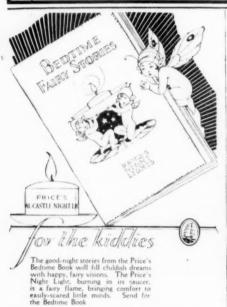


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good post in Manchester to seek a better post in London, I feel in honour bound to suggest caution. Living at home on a salary of £3 10s. a week is vastly different from attempting to live on £3 10s. a week in London. Many girls, I know, live in London on much less. But I know something of their restricted lives, their meagre pleasures, the saving necessary before even a gallery seat at a theatre can be bought.

Very few people who have lived all their lives in their provinces realize the costliness of travel in London. Even with season tickets on trains and with cheap fares on trams travelling expenses may easily amount to seven or eight shillings weekly, instead of the twopence or threepence usually spent daily in the provinces. In provincial towns many girls are able to get home for a midday meal, but in London this is rarely possible. And, most important of all, London is terribly crowded; many women with excellent qualifications are out of work. If, knowing the dangers and difficulties, my correspondent decides to make the great adventure, I wish her good luck, knowing that she will not have taken the step without a word of warning.

The Baby's Name

Mrs. K. L. writes: "I am the mother of a baby boy, and I have all kinds of relatives who hope that I shall name the child after them. I do not want to offend aunts and uncles and cousins who may be helpful to my son later on; but, as I cannot please them all without giving the child a dozen names, I am puzzled."

Not a very big problem, this, is it? Surely the most simple solution is to call the boy after his father, and give him no other Christian name. Alternatively, choose a name which belongs to none of your relatives. Then, if they are so silly as to be offended, they will all be offended. But I cannot believe that intelligent, sensible people would refuse to help an attractive boy who appealed to them simply because his parents had exercised their right to choose the child's name. dentally, the fashion of giving a child only one Christian name is growing. And, seeing that even such simple and lovely names as Margaret and Richard are shortened into "Peg" and "Dick," why give any child a series of names which, after the day of his christening, are unlikely to be spoken more than about half a dozen times in his life.

Trying to Look Young

I think the best way to look young is to stop trying to look young. In spite, "Janet," of all that has been written about women of forty who look five-and-twenty I am inclined to think that most of us look our age. The shingled head and the slender outline may give a superficial boyishness, but it is always the face which suggests the joyous youth or the mellow middle age or the finished perfection of old age in the man or woman at whom we look, And to my mind it is much better to be an attractive forty-five than to try to appear to be an attractive twenty-five. There is a gift for preserving a young heart which some people possess, and they preserve it right through life. I know one such woman in my own mother, whose age one does not consider simply because her dear heart is young. And that is the only kind of youngness worth having, the only kind that pleases and charms, where henna dyes and lipsticks and rouge and all the beauty bought at the chemist's shop merely advertise the fact that one does not feel young, and so is trying to look young. Women all suffer more or less from the delusion that only in her physical youth is woman attractive; yet, very many men and women do not find youth as youth attractive. With its hardness, its intolerance, and often its arrogant selfishness youth can be a most unlovely period in a woman's life, reflecting such qualities in the face and in the manner. I am quite sure that the great efforts some women make to keep themselves young-looking only result in making them look older than they are. You would laugh at a woman of fifty who wore white muslin and a blue sash and little white socks; but she would be no more foolish than the woman of forty who tries to take twenty years off her age by dressing, talking, and acting like a "flapper,"

Not Marketable

I am afraid that your qualifications, excellent though they be, are not marketable, "J.T." The day of the lady companion who was paid to arrange flowers, shop, do a little needlework, and help to entertain has gone. Such things are now done either by the mistress of the household herself, or, with the exception of entertaining, by her servants. Taking into account board, room, laundry, and wages it costs from £2 to £3 a week to keep one resident servant. That is a large sum out of the income of

a professional man, and in return for such an expenditure people to-day want very definite service. First-class plain cooking, the ability to cut out and make clothes, a knowledge of the laundering of delicate articles are marketable assets. A domestically inclined woman can acquire these assets at small cost if she is willing, and I advise you to make yourself competent in some domestic capacity rather than hope that you can get employment by doing such things as the mistress of a household in these days generally does herself. There is, as you suggest, a demand for lady housekeepers, but they must be highly trained women who can control a large establishment and who know how to manage servants and to cater economically. In the old days, when middle-class people had more money and more leisure for the pleasant little graces and hospitalities of life, the lady companion, who took the place of a daughter, was often a much-valued member of the household. But those days have gone, and women who, like yourself, find rather late in life that they must earn their living, should be courageous enough to face the changed conditions, and adapt themselves as far as possible to modern needs.

Too Many Novels?

I agree with a father who writes to me suggesting that many young women read too many novels. He says:

"My daughter has just subscribed to a circulating library, and she reads two or three novels a week. She is old enough to please herself, and I have done no more than comment a little sarcastically, perhaps, on her devotion to fiction. But she was educated at a first-class school, and I cannot help thinking that there is something wrong with a system of education which turns out girls who have no desire to read anything but the latest romantic novel from the circulating library."

I think the cause is simply a rather natural reaction. After some years of serious study, a girl who finds that she has freedom to choose her own books swings from Shakespeare and Carlyle to-well, we will not indicate the novelists. And there is also a little harmless snobbishness in most young girls which makes them anxious to tell their friends that they have read the last best-seller of which everyone is talking.

If a girl has in her home been sur-

rounded by books with more substance than the average novel, she will, if she has any love of letters at all, come back to litera-And it must be remembered, too, that often the discovery of the eternal satisfaction and comfort of books is made late rather than early in life. It is true that a diet of novel-reading and nothing else must injure the mental digestion, but do not be sarcastic. Why not ask your daughter to read some book in which you are interested, so that you can discuss it together? Such a request will appeal to her vanity. She will read the book, and she will discuss it, and by such means you may be able to bring her to a deeper understanding of letters.

I confess that I do not know just how literature is "taught" in schools to-day, but I remember that my first acquaintance with the works of Milton was a punishment by which I was compelled to learn a great part of "Paradise Lost" by heart. And thereafter I disliked Milton, and even to-day have no inclination to read this author's works.

Is It Interterence?

Naturally, "Sybil," it is interference to give advice unwanted to a married couple who appear to you to be in matrimonial difficulties, and my experience is that such advice is rarely acted upon, and that quite frequently it does more harm than good. Indeed, I am very much in favour of married people keeping their troubles to themselves, for I know that often the relationship between husband and wife has been made difficult by the memory that in a time of stress someone was taken into the confidence of either or both, and has been made aware of all kinds of domestic difficulties. Subsequent little troubles are then often attributed to "influences" which do not really exist, and well-meaning friends are blamed for stepping in a second time when, perhaps, they have really learned their lesson and kept out of it all.

In some grave emergency the advice of a discreet friend is sometimes helpful; but my advice to all who would seek or give advice where marriage disputes are concerned is that of Punch: "don't." Few husbands can like to feel that their deficiencies are being discussed outside the home, and few wives would feel comfortable if they knew that their own failings were talked over by the husband and his friends.

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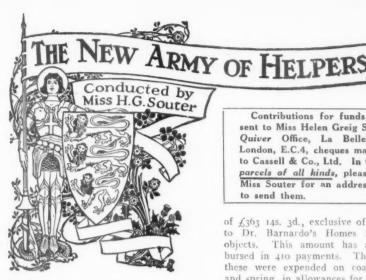
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All About Ourselves

Y DEAR READERS, -This month I find there are so many clamant cases, old and new, amongst our own poor, that I am devoting all my space to an account of their requirements, and I am the more encouraged to do so as I have found that as a rule these make a stronger appeal than hospitals and organized charities.

By the time these pages appear, I shall have completed my first year as the Conductor of the New Army of Helpers, and I feel as if I ought to give some account of my stewardship, for I never lost sight of the fact that I am but the almoner of your generosity, and the link between those who help and those who are helped. It has been a privilege to serve in such a capacity, and those who have contributed so liberally to the various funds may "lay the flattering unction to their soul " that they have really and truly assisted a great number of thoroughly deserving people, and have brightened, heartened, and cheered the lives of hundreds who, but for the little timely help, must have been very much worse off than they are.

Statistics are rarely interesting, so I shall get rid of them as soon as possible. Mrs. Sturgeon, whom everyone will be delighted to learn is greatly improved in health, handed me over the sum of £70 15s. 11d. Up to October 7 last, I received, mostly in small sums, £291 18s. 4d., making a total

Contributions for funds should be sent to Miss Helen Greig Souter, The Quiver Office, La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C.4, cheques made payable to Cassell & Co., Ltd. In the case of parcels of all kinds, please write to Miss Souter for an address to which to send them.

of £363 14s. 3d., exclusive of subscriptions to Dr. Barnardo's Homes and specified objects. This amount has all been disbursed in 410 payments. The majority of these were expended on coal last winter and spring, in allowances for special needs, in cases of severe illness, for arrears of rent, for short holidays to those who had not been away for years and but for your kindness would not have been away yet, for shoes and slippers and comforts for invalids, for a fresh start to several, and in a variety of ways too numerous almost to mention.

Rarely have I had to refuse any genuine cry of need; but now, at the beginning of winter, the cupboard is bare and already letters, requesting that the allowances of last year for coal may be continued, are coming in.

Our Coal Fund

Since, in the words of Sydney Smith, "The season set in with its usual severity as early as September, the cellars of a number of invalids had to be partially stocked. One Helper, Mrs. Miller, of Helensburgh, very liberally sent a contribution of £10, Mr. Malcolm McNeill f.3. in view of such early claims, and I have given £1; but more money is urgently required if the work is to be carried on.

As you sit enjoying the luxury of a big fire blazing on the hearth and radiating comfort and happiness on every hand, think of those crouching miserably over the merest handful of coal, every piece of which is hoarded as of greater value than diamonds in the estimation of those who suffer intensely from the cold and who dread the thought that their scanty store

may not last more than another day or two. It is very difficult, short of actually seeing the wretchedness and misery entailed by the want of fuel, for readers in health and comfort to realize how intense is the misery of those who are ill or poorly clad to lack warmth, and how they would much rather suffer the pangs of hunger than not have

even a tiny fire.

On the behalf of Old Age Pensioners with barely enough to keep soul and body together; of middle-aged and elderly women in single rooms, lonely, delicate, helpless, and oft-times almost hopeless; of widows with young families waging a tremendous and plucky fight to bring up their children respectably; of ex-Service men 'down and out" through no fault of their own; of women getting on in life and finding the struggle keener and more difficult each year because no one wants to employ them when they look shabby and poor and spiritless, I would earnestly appeal for funds to keep their hearths cheerful and bright and give them a measure of fresh confidence to go on and believe that somehow "the best is yet to be." I feel assured that my pleading shall not fall on deaf ears, even at this time of universal goodwill, and I should like to remind you of these lines:

> For the heart grows rich in giving, All its wealth is golden grain, Seeds which mildew in the garner, Scattered, fill with gold the plain.

A Pathetic Human Document

The following reached me quite recently:

Dear Madam.—Each menth as I have sat in the Library, reading your pages, I have tried to summon up enough courage to write, be-seeching your aid or advice, and now when my trouble is more than I can bear up under I have decided to do so, hoping if possible you will help me in some way or other.

My life has been a tragedy from the beginning—a love child, but one who has never known same; just one ugly nightmare of Lovelessness, Limitations, and Poverty—which is always the lot of those who suffer for the sins

of the fathers.

I have tried, only God knows how hard, to live a straight and good life, but a fate more cruel than the grave has dogged me all the way. No sooner have I obtained work that would bring a little pleasure into my loveless life than something happens whereby I lose it. When this goes on for years, and one is without friends, Hope begins to die slowly and unwillingly but surely, and now, after months of tramping about for work, writing hundreds—thousands, in fact—of letters, walking to post these because I have no money for stamps, I am worn out physically, mentally,

and very nearly morally. I simply can't go on.
... Work would give me the urge to live;
but soon I shall become unemployable with
clothes wearing out, and myself worn out with
worry, etc.

I was very deeply touched by this cry of anguish from the depths of a young woman's soul. I sent by return some money, with a message of sympathy, and asked the writer to come and see me and I would try to help her further. She was unable to keep the appointment, and I felt disappointed; but a letter very different in tone from the first came to hand, which ran thus:

Dear Friend,—Thank you ever so much for your most kind letter and enclosure. I am very, very grateful indeed, for it is a ray d joy to feel and know that there are a few whitry to help others in a practical way.

Too often people are made hard and bitter while, when suffering agonies of mental anguish, they are only preached at and the lett to starve. I speak from a very bitter experience. . . If only such would remember that Christ fed the multitude as well as preached to them. Your practical help is all the more appreciated.

There is more in the same strain. She has references, has been accustomed to shop and business life, but would take any kind of work at a small salary, and would be grateful for clothes. She is 5 feet 7½ inches, slim, and takes 5's in shoes.

Two Elderly Teachers

Two ex-teachers—one 67, the other 72-have written recently inquiring if there are any funds for such as they. The younger, when teaching failed, took posts as domestic help and companion; but now she is told she is too old, and her heart fails her at the thought of the future. The elder has lost friends who were wont to assist her, and now she and her husband have only one Old Age Pension to depend on for all their wants.

I do so want to hold out a helping hand to all of them. Please make it possible, so that we may minister in Christ's stead to those little ones of His, and show something of His spirit as we celebrate His Advent.

A Long List of Wants

Several ex-Service and other men, one a young giant of 5 feet 3 inches, appeal to me for clothes and overcoats. Their own are so shabby that when they apply in person for situations, their appearance is very much against them and they lose their chance of a job.

FACTS ABOUT FUEL TO BE REMEMBERED

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- The heating value of any fuel is expressed in British Thermal Units—abbreviated to "B.Th.U."
- The heating value of Gas is stated in terms of so many (usually about 500) B.Th.U. per cubic foot.
- The heating value of Electricity is always 3412 B.Th.U. per Board of Trade unit of energy.
- A "Therm" is the amount of heating value represented by 100,000 B.Th.U.
- 200 Cubic feet of Gas of a heating value of 500 B.Th.U. per c. ft. have a total heating value of 1 Therm.
- 29³ Units of Electricity have a heating value of 1 Therm. Therefore:

20 Cubic feet of Gas costing about one penny have the heating value of 3 Units of Electricity.

- 20 Cubic feet of Gas are obtained for a depletion of the nation's coal resources only one-third of that entailed in the generation of 3 units of Electricity.
- In the manufacture of Gas, valuable chemical by-products are secured which are lost when coal is burned under boilers in a power station.

That is why—in a country dependent upon coal for its supplies of both gas and electricity—it is out of the question to use electricity as the general medium for obtaining heat—as distinct from mechanical power—for either domestic or industrial purposes; and

That is why it would be as economically unsound as it would be commercially unjust for the Government to take steps to develop artificially the use of Electricity.

There is ample room and great scope for both Gas and Electricity in the service of the Nation. But they should be left alone to develop their services on sound economical lines, without Government interference or subsidy.

A full statement of the case entitled "Facts about Fuel for Heat and Power" will be forwarded, post free on request, by

THE

BRITISH COMMERCIAL GAS ASSOCIATION 28 Grosvenor Gardens, London, S.W.1



Will Readers of "The Quiver" please send a

GENEROUS CHRISTMAS GIFT

to the

Shaftesbury Society

(Ragged School Union, 1844)

"CHEER - UP" SOCIETY OF LONDON'S POOR AND CRIPPLE CHILDREN.

Children's Missions and Institutes; Surgical Aid; Provision of Clothing, Boots, and Toys, etc.

Mr. ARTHUR BLACK, John Kirk House, 32 John Street, London, W.C.1.
Treasurers: EDWIN DODD, Esq.: WALTER SCOLES, Esq.

YOUR OPPORTUNITY

to DO SOMETHING for the suffering poor this Christmas.

120 Children can be given a good dinner and a happy time for - - . \$5

A big parcel of Christmas food and fare can be taken to the home of some needy and deserving family for

7/6

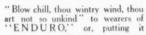
Will you feed the Childrenentertain one or more poor families for Christmas Day?

Please send SOMETHING to help brighten the lives of the poor, at least at Christmastide.

THE CHURCH ARMY MARBLE ARCH, W.1.

Cheques should be crossed Barclays, a/c, Church Army, payable to PREB. CARLILE, D.D., Honorary Chief Secretary.

WOOL, ALL WOOL,





FOR WINTER

differently, though still familiarly, "ENDURO" to-day keeps the doctor away.

"ENDURO"

(PURE WOOL UNDERWEAR)

Nature's finest protection against winter chills, is shaped to the figure, finished with many major and minor improve
Send to-day for Patterns, Illustratet Particulars, and name of nearest Agent.

Barrie and Kersel, Dept. "Q1," ANNFIELD MILLS, HAWICK



THE NEW ARMY OF HELPERS

At least three mothers of young families would be very grateful of clothes for boys and girls from two years old and upwards.

Boots and shoes are a serious consideration for old and young, and these are greatly in demand.

Invalids and others are badly in want of warm nightdresses and underwear.

One invalid is in dire need of new glasses to relieve the strain on eyes and head.

Another is suffering for want of a new truss, which she cannot afford. One homeworker, who is in bad health and has not had a holiday for thirty years (think of it), would be thankful for any odd knitting or rug wool which Helpers and Readers are not requiring.

Orders for the repair and cleaning of furs and fur coats would be welcomed by a home-worker whom I can recommend. She is over seventy, and is trying to support herself and an invalid daughter in this

A hospital nurse, suffering from heart trouble and dependent on relatives, would be glad of orders for jumpers and children's garments. She offers to find the material and knit the former for 12s. 6d.

Christmas Gifts

It would be the greatest boon to many of our readers and others if Helpers would remember them at this time and order some of their Christmas gifts from home-workers. I have a long list of such, and will be much pleased to forward same on receipt of an addressed envelope with a 1/2d. stamp. Some of the raffia articles-needlework novelties, etc .- are very dainty, and would be most acceptable, I feel sure, to the recipients, besides gladdening the heart of the workers and giving them a further chance of Christmas gladness and cheer.

A reader offers a varied assortment of children's dresses, pinafores, and underwear from 2s. 6d. upwards, crocheted shawls at 4s., patchwork quilts at 5s., etc.

Reading Matter

At this season especially, all kinds of reading matter is greatly in request, and I should be thankful for any offers on behalf of quite a number. One reader recently wrote and offered thirty bound and fifteen unbound volumes of THE QUIVER, and I supplied her with a number of addresses of hospitals, homes, etc., where such would be most welcome in wholesale quantities. Others clearing out their cupboards

in preparation for the Feast of the Family might follow her example-in retail fashion.

Private Christmas Cards

Mr. Alfred Martin, a disabled ex-Service man, unable to walk-let alone workwould be pleased to send his book of private Christmas cards to readers and others who might give him an order. He has carried on a small connexion for some years, and it affords him some interest and a little pocket money. He is always grateful for books and magazines. Address, Church Cottage, Foots Cray, Ledcut, Kent.

Correspondence Wanted

Those of us who are strong and well and whose lives are full of interest and work of all kinds can scarcely realize how dependent many invalids are on letters, and post cards even, from the outer world. The receipt of one is like news from a far country, and the thought that someone in the midst of all her busy-ness has remembered is a source of joy to the shut-in ones.

One invalid, who writes that she only has sixpence from her small annuity after paying her rent, would be grateful for an occasional letter and a helping hand. She longs above all things for a tiny cottage of her own, instead of living in other people's houses. Her present landlady was very unpleasant for days because one morning her lodger had two letters by post and she had none! The poor thing fled to the house of a friend in Scotland until the storm in a teapot blew over.

Another poor and helpless invalid, confined to the same room for fourteen years, finds that several correspondents who used to write regularly have forgotten her, and

she is anxious for others.

A Christmas Treat in the East End

Miss May Wynne, the well-known novelist, is not only devoting her time and talent to the poor of the East End, but living amongst them and working chiefly in connexion with St. Luke's Church and Mission, Plaistow, to which I referred a few months back. In acknowledging some old clothes and money sent, Miss Wynne writes me:

I don't know if your readers would care to contribute towards our Christmas Treattea and magic lantern for over 200 mothers of the club. If they only sent a shilling I would be grateful, as expenses roll up in the winter, especially when we have no Sick or Blanket Fund. So many only have a sheet and old clothes for bed covering. Anything of that nature could be sent to me at 3 Wanlip Road, Plaistow, E.13.

Expressions of Gratitude

If some of our readers are at times tempted to think that the little they could send would avail nothing in the face of such terrible problems of poverty as are mentioned here month after month, they would change their opinion if they were to read the letters which come to me almost daily. Naturally some of the Helped have a greater facility for expressing themselves than others; but, as a rule, one can read between the lines and understand how the cheque or the postal order—even for a few shillings, has put fresh heart into them and lightened their weary load—because it means that someone cares.

One writes: "What a blessing the Coal Fund is no one knows better than myself, and many more can say the same. I thank God daily for all your help and kindness and pray that He may give you all the strength needed to carry on the work."

Another acknowledgment runs thus: "I feel I cannot express how grateful I am for the QUIVER Helpers, and am sure could those who help know how many silver linings are sent when clouds are dark, they would be rewarded, and if they could only see us when a letter brings, say, an unexpected cheque, or a parcel of clothing arrives, or how much a bright letter means to shut-in ones, they would reap a great joy."

An Empty Cupboard

Another recipient says: "I never weep, even when I have nothing to eat or am in great difficulties; but so soon as relief comes, such as your cheque, then I break down, but it is with thankfulness. All I had got in my cupboard this morning was a bit of bread and a half rasher of becon for the whole day and the next two or three days, had your precious gift of 10s, not arrived, so I just feel choking with gratitude. The tears will come. I have so much to thank you for, I hardly know how to accomplish it."

Gifts of Clothing, Books, Letters, etc.

My grateful thanks are due to the following for their great kindness:

Mrs. Sibbald, Mrs. Lewis, Miss A. M. Scarborough, Miss Forster, Anonymous, Mrs. Kimber, Mrs. Dew, Miss Irvine, Mrs. Howard, Miss Godby, Mrs. Park, Mrs. Whiting, Mrs. D. Shaw, Mrs. Walden, Miss Randle, Mr. Selwyn Oxley, Mr. Arthur Black, Miss Roe, Miss C. Fox, Mrs. Pratt, Mrs. Hatton, Miss Stokes, Miss Shirley, Miss Cook, Miss Cull the donor of a beautiful knitted coat and skirt which were a delight to the recipient, Mrs. Drury, and the anonymous senders of magazines, etc.

SOS Fund.—Mrs. Cecilia S. Miller, £10; Mrs. Frank Blatch, £1; Mrs. J. J. Jessop, 58.; Miss E. K., £1 rs.; Miss Mills, £1; Anon., 10s.; Miss K. Richardson, 10s.; Mrs. A. M. Jobson, £4; A Well-Wisher, 58.; Mother and Daughter, 17s. 8d.; "Sympathizer," 6s. 6d.; Mrs. Boler, 12s. 6d.; I. L. R., £1; J. K., 10s. Save the Children Fund.—Mother and

Daughter, 178, 4d.
British Home for Incurables. - Mrs. A. M. Jobson, £1.

Wishing you all the merriest of Christmases and the brightest of New Years,

Yours sincerely,

HELEN GREIG SOUTER.

The Sussex Edition of Sheila Kaye-Smith

Some Press Appreciations.

"She is one of the very few novelists now writing who have quite definitely achieved greatness."—Westminster Gazette.

"We have learnt to associate with this author's work sound literary method, deep feminine sensibility, and an air of conviction which glows with the fire of sincerity and truth."—Daily Telegraph.

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—Daily Graphic.

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Spell Land Green Apple Harvest
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Three Against the World

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even after all other remedies have failed. Such honourable men as Earl Roberts, Lord Roden, and Sir S. A. Blackwood, K.C.B., would never have testified to the benefits they received had not the relief obtained been very real and evident. By wishing their names to be mentioned as wearers of these wonderful Garments of Health it was with the hope that others would follow their example and so obtain relief from suffering. You may learn all about the "Magnetaire" Garments of Health from "The Health Adviser." In this valuable little book you may read of the good the Garments of Health have done for others-why should they fail in your case? A copy can be yours FREE by writing for it.



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A Great Healing and Strengthening Power.—How it Relieves and Cures the following Ailments—Ansemia, Asthma, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Consumption, Debility, Epilepsy, Gout, Heart Disease, Indigestion and Dysepsia, Influenza, Insomnia, Kidney Troubles, Locomotor Ataxy, Nervous Depression, Nervous Diseases, Neuralgia, Neurasthenia, Neuritis, Paralysis, Pleurisy, Pneumonia, Rheumatism and Lumbago, Sciatica, Varicose Veins. Experiences (with photos) of eminent ladies and gentlemen, including Viscount Roberts, Lord Roden, Sir S. A. Blackwood, K.C.B., Rev. J. Wilkinson (Midmay), Bishop La Trobe, Paxton Hood (Author and Preacher), T. H. Escott, Esq., and others.

Escott, Esq., and others.

Illustrations showing how Relief and Cure may be obtained. Remarkable experiences of Drs. Andrew Wilson, Chas. Fox, Laurie, Dobson, Bodman, Fordham and others.

"The Gift of Sleep"

Sleep is nature's method of re-charging the body with energy, with life, with vigour. Without restful sleep the whole system becomes starved and weakened, so that disease makes a ready prey of the victim of sleeplessness,
"The Gift of Sleep" is the title of a book which tells
of a natural manner by which restful refreshing sleep may

of a natural manner by which restul refreshing steep may be obtained.

These are the contents of "The Gift of Sleep":—What is Sleep? The Causes of Insomnia, Dangerous Narcotics, The Cure of Insomnia, Nervous Diseases, Neuralgia, Neurits, Neurasthenia, Nerve Strength, Why the Garments of Health Cure.

A copy will be sent you FREE on application.

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Ask every Girl you know

the way to win a big Cash Prize. Get your ticket for the Great New Colour Ballot, and ask your friends to help you in making out a list of the most popular colours. Over 1,100 Money Prizes will be awarded—with £10,000 as the First Prize.

Start early. The sooner you buy your ticket the more time you will have to consult your girl friends. And their ideas are worth having. Most women have "an eye for colour." You can have no end of fun making out your entries together-and you may win the ten thousand pounds.

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And over 1,100 other Cash Prizes to be won.

TO HELP THE HOSPITALS

TICKETS 5/-

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(A Half-Ticket may win Half a Prize)

Tickets from Newsagents, Booksellers or

-- POST THIS COUPON ---

To THE BRITISH CHARITIES ASSOCIATION, Kingsway House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2.

and stamped addressed envelope. I enclose &

Colour Ballot

1 whole tickets Pleas: send me

..... half-tickets Nane in full

(Mr., Mrs., or Miss) Address.....

O.B.2

Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to the British Charities
Association and crossed "& CO."
PLEASE WRITE CLEARLY.



Lady Pamela's Letter



EAR COUSIN DELIA,—At this festive season our thoughts run much on the subject of presents—what we shall choose for our friends, how we shall pack our gifts, and how, when, and where we shall present them. It may not be a mistake to consider the subject from another point of view—that of the recipient, for we ourselves will, in all probability, have to figure in that capacity on more than one occasion.

For many weeks before Christmas Day itself most people have their thoughts and time much occupied by trying to choose really appropriate and acceptable offerings for friends and relatives. When the great day arrives, the many mysterious-looking parcels which have been smuggled into the house change hands, and then it is that each individual has the opportunity of being an ideal present-receiver, or quite the reverse. We all know so well the ungracious recipient who takes our gift with a non-committal air, and although his or her lips move with words of thanks, they have no life in them and might just as well be a tew desultory remarks about the weather!

Then there is the critical recipient who examines our gift with such a close scrutiny that we at once realize what a paltry offering it is, and how full of flaws and deficiencies! Vet, again, there is the recipient who thanks as with a certain degree of warmth and assures us that our gift will be useful, but who shows no appreciation at all of the kindly thought that prompted our choice of that particular present.

How different is the cordial soul who not only appears pleased, but is so in reality, and who genuinely glows with joy in our kindly remembrance of him? To be able to accept a useless and perhaps ugly present graciously is indeed an art, but it can be done if we try to remember not the intrinsic value of the gift, but the kind thought that prompted our friend. It may have been a most misguided and inappropriate selection, but, after all, tastes differ. If we think the gift itself is hideous, we must try to be grateful and appreciative of the affection it represents. After all, most donors hope and wish to give pleasure and do not deliberately choose an ugly present. If it happens to be ugly, it is probably due to a difference of opinion between donor and recipient as to what is and what is not

The whole spirit of Christmas is best cap-

tured when these who give and those who receive gifts try to mutually understand and appreciate each other and cultivate real generosity in both rôles.

Ever yours, PAMELA.

Answers to Correspondents.

Lady Pamela hopes that readers of THE QUIVER will write to her, and she will have much pleasure in answering their letters in this column.

A QUERY ABOUT LEATHER WORK. H. G. (Felixstowe).—You have not asked too many questions, and I am very glad to answer your letter. You can get a book about leather work in "Weldon's Sixpenny Series," No. 27. This will give you a great deal of practical information. The materials are fairly inexpensive, and you will only need a simple outfit of tools, such as a sharp knife, a skiving tool, a hammer, round punch, etc.

FOR THE CHRISTMAS MENU. Avis L. (Manchester).-You are by no means the only hostess who is perturbed at the thought of all the extra catering entailed by the festive season. However, you must remember that everybody will welcome a change from hot plum-pudding, and that few sweets are more appreciated than the cold ones prepared or served with Bird's Custard. This is indeed a great standby to the busy housewife, for it is so easily and quickly prepared, and adds great zest to the stewed fruit, tart, or other pudding with which it is served. When you make out your grocery bill for supplies to carry you over the holiday season, make a point of adding Bird's Custard Powder to the list, and it will save you much trouble and everyone will enjoy it.

To CLEAN OLD PEWTER. M. W. (Sutton).—
I am glad you find the correspondence interesting. Pewter may be left with either a dull of a bright surface. For the former, you should wash and dry it and then rub it with a leather. It you prefer, however, a bright surface, you can use various polishes. One consists of a paste made of rottenstone and oil. If you prefer, plain whitening can be used. If the pewter is very dull, you can burnish it by an application of fine steel wool dipped in soap and then gently rubbed in one direction over the surface of the pewter. If you wish to sell some old pewter, you could, perhaps, advertise it in a local paper.

A WELCOME GIFT. Caroline (Bridgnorth).—At this season of the year we are all cudgelling our brains about suitable gifts for our many riends and relatives. As your small nieces and nephews are already so well supplied with toys and are likely to have a still more abundant supply this Christmas, why not, instead, give them a big box of Cadbury's Chocolates? These are made with such delicious centres, and you will feel quite sure that your gift will be most acceptable. You will also have the satisfaction of knowing that you are giving a sweetmeat of high quality that is not only tempting, but nutritious too.

Bedroom Comfort. Nancy R. (Harrogate).—It is quite obvious that the bad colds that worry you each winter are, to some extent, due to the chilliness of your bedroom. Why not take the matter in hand at once and have a gasgrate fitted there? It will not cost much, and you will reap the benefit all through these cold months. I can quite understand your reluctance to give the maids the extra trouble of making you a bedroom-fire so often. This is often a source of domestic friction. It, however, you have a gas-fire, you are quite independent, and can light it just when you like and for as long as you like, and give no one in the house any extra trouble at all.

A WELCOME GIFT. Dandy (Redhill),-Your difficulty is by no means unusual. A woman is much easier to choose an acceptable gift for than a man. Most women love to get pretty trifles, little luxuries that they fancy, but hardly like to buy for themselves. Men are more conservative, and it is generally rather rash to offer anything to wear, such as a tie, or socks. Coloured silk handkerchiefs sometimes please, and a really good fountain-pen, such as the Swan Pen, is invariably a most acceptable gift. These pens have, of course, a world-wide reputation, and when you give one as a present you know you are offering the very best. The average man hankers for a Swan Pen, and will consider it a very well and wisely chosen gift.

FOR A SMALL SITTING-ROOM. Pearl Maiden (Cardiff).—It is fortunate that your room, although small, has such a pleasant outlook. You can certainly have a yellow wallpaper, and it will look very cheerful and pretty as a background to your dark furniture. You could choose a border introducing fruit and foliage, and this will give the needed touch of variation in colour. The suggestion that the woodwork should be painted black and then varnished is quite good, and this will set off the wallpaper well.

A TEA-DRINKING SUGGESTION. To reador (Maidstone).—There is no reason at all why you should not drink tea, and, in fact, it would be bad for you to give it up when you feel the need for it so distinctly. Of course, you must take it in moderation, and be careful to always drink Mazawattee tea, which is well known for its purity and excellence of flavour. To get the best results, always use treshly boiled water, scald the teapot, and after

making the tea do not let it infuse for more than three or four minutes. If you follow these directions, you will enjoy a very delicious and beneficial cup of tea.

To Remove Candle-Grease. Cedric (Birmingham).—From your description, it certainly sounds very like candle-grease. Take some pieces of clean bl-string paper, place them over the spots, and then press with a hot iron. This will melt the wax and cause it to be absorbed by the paper. You may have to repeat this treatment several times. If any mark remains, take a little fuller's earth, make it into a paste with water, and spread it on the mark. Leave till perfectly dry and then brush it off carefully.

A Delicious Toffee. Pimpernel (Oxford).—When making out your lists for Christmas, do not forget to include a good supply of Mackintosh's Toffee de Luxe. This is always a prime favourite with grown-ups and children alike, so that if you invest in a large tin it will be greeted with acclamation! It is so satisfactory, too, to offer a sweetmeat which you know is really wholesome as well as appetizing. At this season most people eat more sweets than at other times, and it is, therefore, particularly important to select a really reliable make. Mackintosh's toffee is deservedly popular, for it is highly nutritious as well as of most tempting flavour.

FOR THE BATH. Elsie (M. B.).—If the water is so hard, you can certainly soften it by adding suitable bath salts. If you make these yourself and use them sparingly, they need not be an extravagance. You should buy ordinary crystal carbonate of soda and crystallized borax in equal quantities and mix them in a wide-mouthed bottle. Put in a layer a day and sprink'e with any perfume you like. You can spray over them artificial violet perfume, which your chemist will supply, and this will perfume them very pleasantly. After preparing them, it is best to keep the bottle closely stoppered for a month or so before you actually use them.

A USERIL HINT. Maisie (Nuneaton).—I quite agree with you that besides offering nutritious food you must try to make it appetizing. You ought to make a point of always keeping some cubes of Oxo in the house, and it will prove its value over and over again. So often the addition of a cube of Oxo to the soup gives that finishing touch of perfection; or, if you come in cold and want something warm and comforting quickly, Oxo again comes to the rescue. In small bulk, it offers much nourishment as well as a very pleasant flavour. It is by attention to these details that you will make your catering a success.

The Deties of a Bridesman. Constant Reader (Reading).—These are not very onerous, and may possibly include helping your friend to dress for her wedding or to change into her traveling gown afterwards; but more likely you will simply attend her at the church. During the actual ceremony you will stand near and hold her gloves and bouquet.



IF you dye the Drummer way you need never hesitate. Even your most delicate, most costly fabrics you can trust to Drummer, confident that the result will be

the result will be . . . just perfect.

To-day more women than ever regularly use Drummer Dyes, not merely because they effect economies, but because their charming tints give new beauty to all household and personal fabrics. Once you know the enchantments of Drummer Dyeing you will have a dye-day as regularly as you have a wash-day.

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